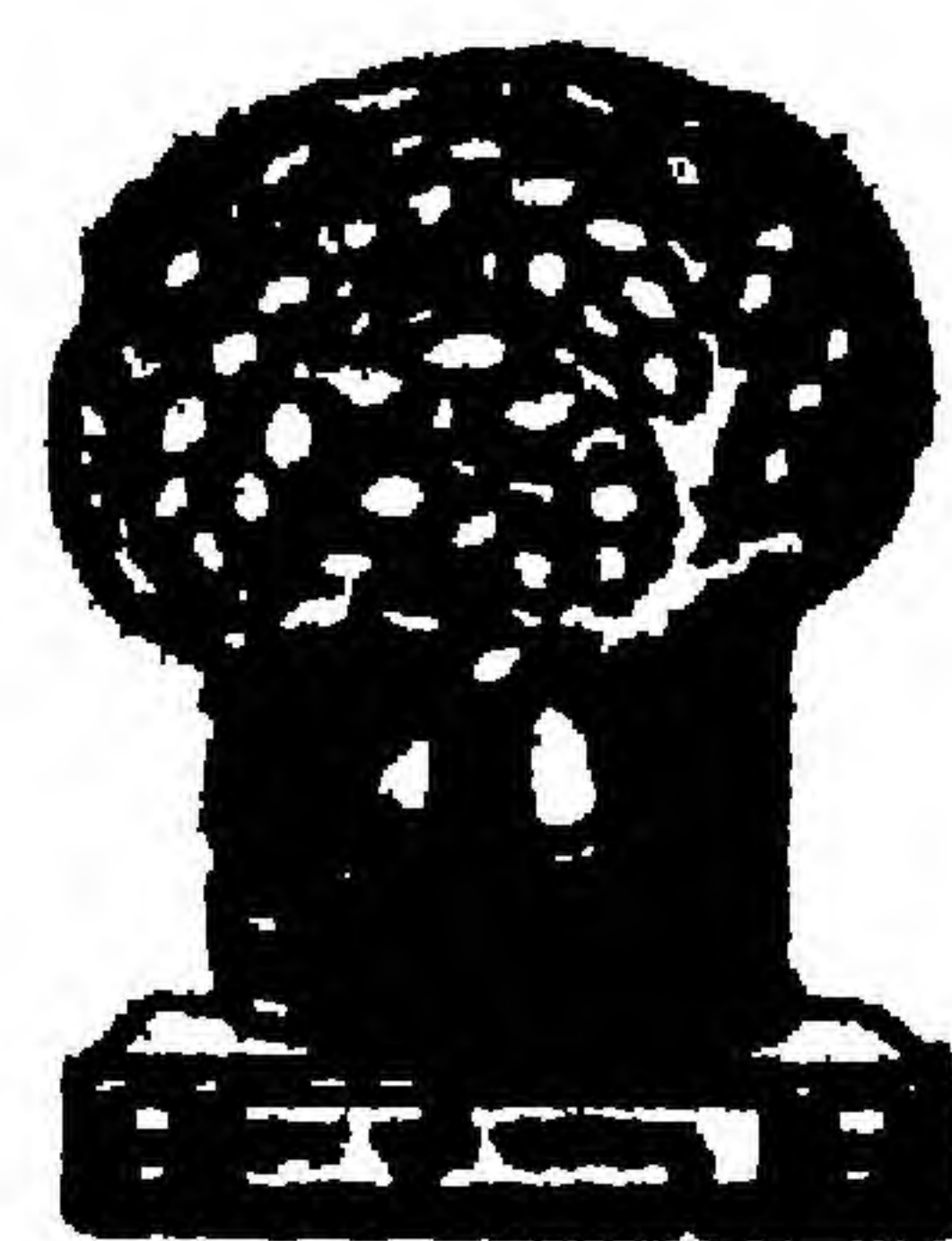


GURU NANAK

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GURU NANAK

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Dedicated to
the late Dr. S. RADHAKRISHNA.
Man of God
in token of my love and esteem

MESSAGE

SAINTS like Guru Nanak make their presence in this weary world in order to show the right path to the suffering humanity by their personal sacrifice and example. The message of Guru Nanak was a great blessing at a time when India was facing a great crisis. May the biography of this great Guru enlighten and guide humanity for ages to come !

THE DALAI LAMA

DHARAMSALA

March 31, 1966

FOREWORD TO SECOND EDITION

THIS COUNTRY has produced remarkable personalities in every walk of life since the earliest times. Our history is crowded with names of outstanding persons who have made notable contributions whether in art, literature, politics, science or other fields. Some are household words. There are many whose names are familiar but about whose life and work little is known to the public. There are others about whom people know little but who have made remarkable achievements.

The history of a country is, to a great extent, the history of its great men and women. They have moulded it and built it up. It is essential for the ordinary citizen to know something about these personalities in order to understand how our country has evolved. The national Biography Series proposes to make available in a simple narrative form the life of such great men.

One of the outstanding figures of middle-ages is Nanak. He came during a period of great social, political and spiritual crisis in the history of India. A few centuries before, Muslim Rule had come to India and Babar had just established the Moghal dynasty. The coming of a new religion and the political conquest of the country by the victors, naturally, created a spiritual and social upheaval in the country. This led to a spiritual reaction which can be considered a mental conflict and effort to find a new way to answer the challenge posed by the new spiritual thoughts that came with the Muslims.

There were many responses to answer that challenge. Nanak's was probably one of the most profound ones. It was so specially from the practical point of view because it created a new stream of thought which led ultimately to a practical challenge to the Moghal Rule in India. As a matter of fact, his was one of the two new preachings which led to effective political results. The other one was the Maratha upheaval in the South which was led by Ramdas Swami.

Though Nanak was born in what is now known as Panjab, he has not once mentioned the name in his numerous works. He preached and wrote in the people's language of North India, understood throughout the North and known as *Sadhu Bhasha*. He travelled widely not only in India but outside also to preach his message of love and unity of all mankind whether they were Hindus, Muslims or of any other religion. He did not believe in untouchability or caste. For him, there was only one God and one man. He notably differed from other saints of the period (except Ramdas in Maharashtra) in that he did not preach unworldliness and retirement from the world to attain God. On the contrary he preached active participation and work for attaining God. His gospel was the germ which ultimately developed into modern Sikhism. Though he is the Guru of the Sikhs, there are millions of others who love and believe in him, and worship him, among Hindus and other religions. There are 'Nanak Panthies' by hundreds and thousands.

Dr. Gopal Singh who has successfully written for us the life of Guru Gobind Singh has in this book narrated in simple and effective language the life and message of Guru Nanak who was the inspirer of the Gurus who came after him. As

Dr. Gopal Singh has himself rightly observed “though many miracles have been attributed to Guru Nanak by the devout, he always insisted that the only miracle he would perform was to teach man how to overcome himself and to become what is his destiny. The miracle for him was an awakened soulful life and he who fulfilled himself thus, was also the man of God.”

NEW DELHI
March 1, 1968.

B.V. KESKAR

I

"There is neither a Hindu, nor a Muslim : only man."

—GURU NANAK

WHEN NANAK was born, his Muslim midwife, Daultan, who attended upon him, revealed to the neighbourhood, it is said, that the child laughed at his birth like an adult. The devout chroniclers suggest that the wise of the community heard notes of celestial music emanating from the high heavens on the advent of Nanak. The family astrologer, Hardyal, on seeing the babe greeted him with joined palms, declaring that he would sit under a royal canopy, and be worshipped by Hindus and Muslims alike, that even the inanimate objects of nature would utter his name with reverence.¹

At a very young age, Nanak was put to school first with a Hindu teacher to teach him the alphabet of his language, and some elementary books of knowledge, and, later, with a Muslim teacher of Arabic and Persian. But, it appears, that Nanak refused to stay long at school.² Instead, he would wander into the woods nearby where dwelt holy men of great

1. Nanak was born in A. D. 1469 in Panjab to the house of Mehta Kalu, a revenue official, and Vedi (Bedi) Khatri by caste, at a place called Talwandi (now Nankana Sahib) in the month of ~~Vaisakh~~ (mid-April to mid-May), though his birthday for some ~~obscure~~ reason is celebrated on the full-moon day of *Kartik* (November). The later ~~chroni-~~cles, however, all confirm the latter date.

2. Some chronicles suggest he was at school at least for seven or eight years. If so, this must be considered good enough for those days. For further elaboration of all such details, please refer to the author's *A History of the Sikh People*.

learning and hoary age from whom he understood the basic truths of various religions. He devoted most of his spare time to meditation upon God, the Absolute (*Nirankar*). This naturally scared his father who wanted Nanak to grow into a successful man of affairs.

There are many stories of his early life current in the idiom of the devout. It is said when the Hindu teacher asked him to learn the alphabet, he wrote an acrostic, or an alphabetical poem, giving the inner meaning of each letter which he said was a symbol to denote either the unity of God, or his wondrous creation, or the need to dwell upon Him. It may be, suggest others, that such a poem was written by Nanak at a later stage, for the one that is included in the Sikh Scripture is a work of great maturity, wisdom and artistic beauty. Does maturity come with the years ?

However, it appears, that Nanak was not long at school as his father, being doubtful of his becoming a scholar, gave him some cattle to graze. Here, too, he seems to have disappointed his sire. For, one day, as he took the cattle out, he himself sat under a banyan tree, meditating on God, while the cattle grazed another's farm. The aggrieved farmer reported the matter to his father who became very angry, but the village chief, Rai Bular, a Rajput Muslim, soothed his frayed temper by agreeing to pay off the entire loss.¹ Such was the devotion that young Nanak evoked from his neighbours. It is also recorded that one day as Nanak slept in the pasture ground, a cobra spread its hood over his head to protect him from the scorching sun ! To the faithful, this was a sign of his divinity, but to his father, of insanity, that he should be so careless about his duties, and about life itself.

1. According to his oldest chronicle, *Puratan Janam Sakhi*, when people went to see the grazed farm, it seemed to stand intact.

The day fixed by the village astrologer as auspicious for the sacred-thread ceremony of Nanak arrived. The family relations from far and near gathered and, as is the custom, a great feast was arranged for the day by his father. But, to the utter shock and wonderment of all, when Nanak was asked to wear the sacred thread, he refused. When reprimanded by the elders, he said, "I wouldn't wear a thread which is soiled, and may be broken or burnt, and goes not with one into the beyond." When questioned lothingly what kind of thread he would wish to wear, that would neither wear out nor burn and keep one's company both here and hereafter, he said : "If compassion be the cotton, of contentment the thread, of continence the knot, and of Truth the twist, these would weave an ideal Thread for the soul. This Thread will neither break nor burn, be soiled nor wasted nor lost. He who wears such a Thread on his neck is the one blessed of God."

This audacity the father could hardly bear. He had been put to great ridicule and shame by his young son. So, at the age of fifteen or sixteen,¹ he was married off to Sulakhani, daughter of Moola, a resident of Batala in the district of Gurdaspur. This, the father thought, in the tradition of all Indian fathers blest with unusual children, would tie him so much down to the earth that there would be no escape for him but to settle down as a man of the world, if not for himself at least for the sake of his wife and children.

But, even this did not help. Though his wife soon begot two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das, Nanak's soul was far from settled. His father thereupon asked him to keep a shop

1. This age differs in various chronicles. The oldest record puts it at twelve years, others at 14, 15, 16, etc. Some say he was married not at Talwandi but at Sultanpur where, according to them, his two sons were also born and to whose memory stand shrines at this place.

and gave him some money to buy goods from a market nearby. As Nanak rode to the market of Chuharkana, on the way he met some holy men who told him that they had not eaten for quite some days. Nanak offered them all the money he had with him to buy food, and returned to his village empty-handed. Fearing the wrath of his father, he stayed out near the outskirts of the village. When his father knew Nanak had returned without any goods, he came hurriedly to ask what had become of the money he had entrusted him with. Nanak replied serenely, "Father, you asked me to strike a profitable bargain. What could have been of more profit to me, or to you, both in this world and the next, than feeding the hungry and the holy." It is said that his father spanked him at this impertinent and unusual reply.

Nanak was asked to farm but he refused. For he cultivated a farm of another kind. When asked what his farm was like, he answered :

"In my body's farm the Mind is the ploughman, Right Conduct the cultivation, Humility the watering of it, God's Essence the seed, Contentment the harrow, and Poverty the fence. Tended by Love, this seed will sprout, and fill the granaries of those who'll act thus. O father, riches do not go along with us when we depart from here, though they've lured the whole world. But few there are who understand this truth." Nanak continued : "O father, I'll grow so much in my farm that it will be sufficient not only for me and my family, but the whole world. After one has eaten out of my hands, he would crave no more. It will settle the accounts of everyone whether these be of this birth, or of previous ones. And the Man for whom I till my land, whose tenant I am. He protects me from drought as from floods, and whatever I ask, and whenever, he gives so much that I entreat : Enough, no more."

Kalu was greatly amazed at this reply, and said, "My son, I haven't seen your Master as you have. In the brotherhood word has gone round that you have turned insane and wild. Follow, therefore, in the footsteps of your forefathers. Without work, who has ever lived ? And for your father's good name, and your mother's, do our bidding, so that we are not put to shame before the whole world."

Nanak replied : "Father, he who has seen my Master has admired Him, got involved with Him." In despair, Kalu asked him to put him wise about his Master a little more thoroughly, so that not only he but the others around him might also understand and not talk disparagingly either of him or his family. Without a moment's hesitation, Nanak replied :

"Everyone hears of Him as great, and calls Him so, but he alone knows His worth who sees His presence. O father, my Master's worth can be measured not, for he who loves Him merges in Him. One would compare Him if there were one to compare with Him. So everyone who knows Him says : O Lord, Thou art what only Thou art."

Then came Nanak's mother. She caressed him most tenderly, and begged of him tearfully to follow the advice of his father. "You are so much absorbed in yourself that people think you have lost your reason. They talk ill of you as of us. My dear little thing, I want people to talk well of you and us." Nanak bowed with bedewed eyes to his mother, but said, "O mother, the call has come to me from yonder lands to save the world which is on fire. Would you rather that everyone of us is burnt to ashes or that as many of us as may be are saved from its all-consuming flames."

Now, everyone was convinced that Nanak was beyond reclaiming. The elders of the family counselled that a physician be called to examine him. Kalu summoned the village physician instantly. He felt Nanak's pulse, but the 'patient' smiled, saying :

“O worthy physician, feel not my pulse, for the malady is not in my body, but in my soul. Take care not of me, O wise one, but of thyself, for he who is not of himself would respond not to thy cure. The malady I’m blessed with is, that I’m in love, and He alone whose lover I am knows how to get me over it.”

When the physician, wonderstruck, asked Nanak what the malady of his soul was like, he answered in most profound terms :

“My one malady is, that I live separated from myself,
And the other, that I seek to be what I ought to be ;
And the third, that I’m in the eye of the all-powerful
Angel of Death.

And the fourth that I can sit not with myself.
O man, thy malady is not in thy body, but in
thy soul, which if pure and whole, maketh
also the body healthful and whole.”

When asked what man’s maladies were due to, he answered : “Pleasures. The pleasures are the sickness of the soul, and their medicament lies in the courting of pain.”

The physician bowed to him, saying, “O Master, thy cure is only in thyself.” But his father and mother pleaded with him for the last time, saying, “They who have given thee birth also have some demands on thee ; will you not submit to their will ? Have you no love left for those who have nurtured thee ?” Nanak replied :

“I know not who’s my father. who my mother,
and from whence I came :
And, why have fire and water blended to make of
me what I am . . .
Within me there’s something that gnaws at my heart,
as if my soul is on fire.

And I feel only if I submitted to my Lord's Will,
there'll be peace for me."

(Gauri, M. I.)

The parents thought, and also the wise of the community that Nanak should change his environment and go to Sultanpur (now in the District of Kapurthala) where his sister, Nanaki, was married to Jairam, the store-keeper of the Muslim Nawab, Daulat Khan. When Nanak's wife heard about it, she was much distressed and said, "You take me also along, for if you go far out, who knows you may or may not remember me. Even here, you care not much for me, but out there I might be totally wiped off your memory." Nanak smiled and said, "If I settle there, I will call thee, provided I earn a bit as they ask me to and can keep thee well. Else you stay here till I come. God will protect thee. Keep thy Master in thy mind." Then, she brought to him his two tender sons. Nanak hugged them to his bosom and blessed them. Then, bowing at the feet of his father and mother he took leave of them. The parents were happy indeed, as also was his wife at heart, that Nanak after all had agreed to adopt the routine of the world.

When Nanak reached Sultanpur, his brother-in-law presented him to the Nawab, who was much impressed by his bearing and innocent and serene looks. "This man," he said, "would keep my things in safe custody," and he gave him charge of a department which issued rations to his servants. Nanak acted most honestly and diligently, but also gave away most of his share to the holy men who frequented him at his storehouse.¹ The news spread like wildfire that Nanak was

1. It is given in the oldest chronicle that his family joined him here as did Mardana, his Muslim playmate, of whom we shall hear often enough hereafter.

squandering the royal stores on unauthorised persons. It was also reported against him that he sat, composed and listless, for hours after his work. And, even at work, when he reached the figure 'thirteen' (in Hindustani '*Tera*', which also means 'Thine'), while weighing up his stores, he would repeat the word a million times, saying "*Tera main Tera*" (Thine, O God, I'm Thine).

While the Nawab was still considering what to do with this unusual man, news came to him that Nanak had disappeared. It is said, when one day he went to bathe at the rivulet nearby, called Wayyain, he did not return for three days, held in trance. People thought Nanak was drowned, but then, he reappeared. It is told in the oldest extant biography of Nanak that in his trance, he saw the Vision of God, who blessed him, and said, "Nanak, I'm ever with thee, and have blessed thee. He who uttereth thy name with love, too will be blessed. Go thou in the wide world and instruct men in my Will. I have blessed thee with my Name. He whom thou wilt bless, will also be blessed by me. I'm thy Absolute God, let thy name be the Guru-God." It is said that Nanak bowed at the Feet of God and was honoured with a Robe. When he got out of his trance and came to the town with only a loin-cloth as his covering, he uttered : "I see here neither a Hindu nor a Musalman : only man !"

This unusual utterance in those dark days of sectarian strife gave cause for much alarm and anxiety to the Qazi. Though the Nawab said, "It appears to me that Nanak is a man of God, so we shouldn't disturb his way of life," yet the Qazi wasn't that sure, and said that his preachings would lead to much confusion in the state. So, he was called to the presence of the Nawab. Said the Qazi, "O Nanak, men say you have gone wild and utter what no one before thee has uttered around here : what sayest thou to it ?" Nanak answered in

one of his hymns to the accompaniment of music played by his companion, Mardana, the Muslim low-caste drummer, who had joined him by now :

“Some say that I’m wild, others that I’m out of step :
 And some say that I’m but a mere man, poor and lowly.
 O men, I’m crazy after my King, my God,
 And known not another than Him, any, not another !
 Yea, he alone is ‘mad’ who is struck with God’s fear,
 and knows not another than His only Master :
 And, he alone who yokes himself to His Master’s task,
 and accepts His Will and plays not clever with
 His love :
 Yea, and loves no one other than Lord, the God,
 And thinks himself bad, and everyone else holy and good.”

Then, the Qazi asked, “How dare you disparage my faith ?”
 Nanak answered in his forthright style :

“It’s far too easy to call oneself a Muslim but far too
 hard to become one !”
 Asked what his understanding of a Muslim was, he replied:
 “If compassion be the mosque, and faith the prayer-mat,
 and honest living one’s Quran ;
 And humility one’s circumcision, and continence
 one’s fasting, then, verily, one may be called a Musalman.
 If virtuous deeds make up one’s pilgrimage to the Kaaba,
 And Truth be the guide of one’s spirit,
 And one’s prayer be for the Lord’s Grace,
 And the rosary be of His Will, then God will
 assuredly keep one’s honour.” (Majh, M.I.)

The Qazi then asked him to say his prayers in the mosque with him and see for himself the difference. Nanak replied :
 “There are five times in the day that you offer your prayers,

so do I. My first prayer is of Truth, the second of honest living, the third of the Grace of God, the fourth of a clean mind, and the fifth of the remembrance of God." But, Nanak added, he would not disappoint the Qazi and would accompany him to the mosque for saying the prayers.

When the prayers were being said at the mosque, Nanak did not join in, stood apart and just smiled. When the prayers were over, the Qazi, much angered, demanded an answer for this impertinence. Nanak again smiled and said, "You say, you were offering your prayers to your God. Nay, you weren't. For while your body bowed and prayed, your mind was in Kabul purchasing horses of fine breed." The Qazi was much put out at this rude though true reply, but kept quiet lest he be further humiliated before his people. But the Nawab was much pleased and said, "O Nanak, what a blessing it would be to have a *dervish* like thee as my Vizier. Do pray stay with me. I have checked up my stores: there's nothing that's short. People talked against thee out of jealousy. I would not let thee go, now that I know who you are." But, Nanak said, "Master, I value thy good words, but no longer will I serve thee. There's another call more urgent for me to answer."

The Nawab then bowed to him, saying, "I will not stand between thee and thy Master. Go, and do as thy God biddeth thee. I've seen in thee what I've read in my holy books : the Vision of God. If I can be of any service to thee, do pray ask me. I shall feel privileged and blessed." But Nanak said he did not need anything save the love of God. And saying so, and taking Mardana along, he went into the wilderness to keep company with the faqirs there.

II

“O man, be not clever with thy God ”

—GURU NANAK

WALKING THROUGH the wilderness, along with Mardana, Nanak covered much territory to the south-west of Panjab. But he stopped nowhere. Whenever a habitation stood on the way, he passed it by. He would pick wild berries or fruit and satisfy his hunger. But, his companion grumbled that he was treating him to no feast as was usual for them who accompanied the pious. But, the Guru reprimanded him, saying that if a person chose the way of God, he should be self-dependent and not live on the charity of the community. But Mardana was not at all convinced of the reasonableness of his Master's advice !

One day, Nanak allowed him to visit a habitation. There, when it became known that a man of God had entered their village, men and women swarmed round him asking for his blessings. Mardana blessed the folk profusely, and they brought him not only delicious foods of various kinds, but also offered him robes of silk, wool and cotton, and also scents of many varieties. Mardana was much pleased at this consideration, and, carrying his bundle, hastened back to the Guru's repose in the wilderness. When Nanak saw his companion loaded with so many gifts, he smiled, and asked why he had disobeyed his command. Mardana felt-uneasy, but said he could not disappoint his devotees. So he carried the bundle along. Nanak asked him to throw it away, which he did with a heavy heart. Then, Mardana asked him whether what one gave away, in charity, to the needy reached the Guru and

pleased God. Nanak said, "Yes, to feed the hungry and cover the naked brings God's mercy upon the giver, but one must give out of one's honest earnings ; and he who receives it must receive only in accordance with his need and no more."

As they travelled along, on the way, they came across a pious-looking thug, Sajjan (meaning gentleman) by name. He was sitting by the road-side, rosary in hand, his catty eyes opening only occasionally to look at the passing travellers. He had not only built a mosque, being a Muslim Sheikh, but also a temple for the Hindus and he would not allow any traveller of whatever community to pass by without offering his hospitality. He would plead with him to stay for the night, treat him with utmost courtesy, and then as the night grew, rob him of all he had and cut his throat and throw his dead body into the well nearby. In the morning, he would come out and sit as if in a trance, telling the beads of a rosary, waiting patiently for the next victim of his foul designs.

When he saw Guru Nanak, he said to his followers, "Treat him well. This seems to be a rich person. His face sparkles with affluence." And so they did. But, when night came and they asked him to retire, Nanak said he would first sing a song in praise of God and then go to sleep. When all his men had gathered, with Sajjan seated in front of Nanak, Mardana took out his rebeck and applied his deft fingers to its strings to emit pious notes in Raga Suhī. And Nanak sang :

"Bright sparkles the vessel of bronze, but rub it and its inner soil comes off. They who call themselves our friends aren't so unless they stand by us in the court of God where all our accounts are settled. What worth is a ruin even if it be plastered and decorated from without ? The cranes live by the river-banks, like the devotees, but their eyes are set ever on the victims of their never-ending hungers. The Simmal-tree is full of leaves and flowers and fruit, but the fruit has no flavour

and the flowers have no fragrance, and the leaves give no shade. The blind man carries the bundle on his head and walks up a mountain, steep and of long distance, but how can he scale the heights without eyes ? O Nanak, of no avail is our cleverness and our feigned goodness. Only His Love saves and cuts the fetters off our feet.”

When Sajjan heard this heart-searching hymn from Nanak, something stirred within him. His soul was awakened and, much ashamed at his foul past, he fell at the feet of Nanak, hugged them warmly, and wept, saying “O Master, you have found me out. Now tell me, how am I to be redeemed ? How are my sins to be forgiven ?” Nanak said, “It is only in two ways that God forgives the past of a man : to confess one’s guilt and to expiate for them.” Sajjan cried, “I confess to my shame that I have robbed many people, and cut their throats and amassed a fortune thereby, pretending all the while my devotion to God. But, how am I now to expiate for my sins ?” The Guru replied : “Bring out all you have and distribute it among the poor and the holy in the name of God.” Sajjan, in a moment of supreme transformation, did all that he was bidden to, and thereafter became a great devotee of God. Nanak made him the first high priest of his mission. Everyone who heard of this remarked, “Nanak has indeed performed a miracle !”

From here, Nanak and his companion went to Sayyadpur (now called Eminabad, in the district of Gujranwala) and stayed at the house of a low-caste carpenter, Lalo by name. This soon became the talk of the town that a holy man of Kshatriya descent was inter-dining with an untouchable. This talk also reached the ears of Malik Bhago, a local official of high caste. He had arranged a great feast to which he invited holy men from far and near. Hearing that Nanak was a

great devotee of God, he called him also to partake of his food. But Nanak refused to participate, saying :

“There are the lowest of the low-born and the lower still and the least of these. Nanak is only a companion of them and has no desire to compete with the great.”

The Malik was greatly incensed at this reply and asked his servants to force Nanak into his presence if he would not come of his own accord. The Guru seeing the haughtiness of his emissaries at first refused to budge, but then thinking that this might be a good occasion also to teach him a lesson, agreed to go. When he reached the palatial residence of his host and was offered food, he declined to eat. When asked why he was insulting the Chief thus in the presence of the whole assembly when he had felt no qualms in partaking of a low-caste carpenter's food, the Guru replied calmly : “Your food reeks of blood, while that of Lalo, the carpenter, tastes like honey and milk.” When asked how he came to this impertinent conclusion, the Guru replied : “Lalo earns with the sweat of his brow and out of it offers whatever little he can to the wayfarer, the poor and the holy, and so it tastes sweet and wholesome, but you being without work, squeeze blood out of the people through bribery, tyranny and show of authority. Such food cannot but be stained with the blood of the weak, the innocent and the poor.”¹

Bhago was much ashamed at this and became speechless. News travelled like wildfire in the countryside that a Guru of men had appeared who could challenge caste and authority with a fearlessness unknown before.

1. The old chronicles mention here a miracle having been performed by Nanak. When he squeezed bread from the two houses between his two hands, blood actually was seen, it is said, to ooze out of one and milk of the other.

From thence, the Guru proceeded to Kurukshetra, a great centre of Hindu pilgrimage, where a big fair was being held on the occasion of the solar eclipse. But before Nanak did so, he proceeded to Panipat where a great Muslim Sufi, Shah Sharaf by name,¹ had made his abode

Shah Sharaf at first wanted to know why Nanak was wearing the dress of a householder, so unusual for a faqir, and why he had not shaven his head. Nanak answered : "It's the mind that one must shave, not one's head. To be humble like the dust is the true way to shave one's mind." As for his dress, he explained : "One must abandon pleasures and egotism and surrender one's head to one's God. Then, whatever dress one wears is sacred."

Nanak continued : "One must submit to the instruction of the Wise, and to cherish God in the heart should be the gown and the cap of the holy. He who holds his mind and relishes the fare of both pleasure and pain alike, and lives, composed in utter poise, for him it matters not what dress he wears."

When asked to what sect and caste he belonged and how he lived, Nanak replied, "I belong to the sect of the Right Way. My caste is that of fire and wind. I live in the manner of the tree and the earth, for, like them, I endure being cut or dug into. Like a river, I care not whether one throws flowers into me or dust. Like the sandalwood, I consider that alone to be living which is fragrant."

His host then asked him what a *dervish* should be like. Nanak answered: "He who while alive is dead; while he wakes is asleep, and who knowingly gets robbed of himself. Yea, he alone is a *dervish* who welcomes both joy and pain, alike, and

1. This might be the assumed name of the then occupant of the *gaddi*, as was indeed the custom, for Shah Sharaf had breathed his last in A D 1374

sorrows not, nor is angered, and covets nothing and has no pride. Who sits composed in God, hearing nought but what God utters and beholding Him alone in everything that is, and is not."

Shah Sharaf was so much pleased at these replies that he bowed at his feet and kissed his hands, saying: "O man of God, to question thee was a sacrilege on my part. Even to behold thee is to behold the Vision of God."

Many legends and anecdotes which are prevalent about Nanak among devotees tend to show that he had no faith in the taboos, religious ceremonies, rites and rituals followed by the orthodox and conservative people of his time.

It is said that at Kurukshetra, a follower of his offered him deer-meat to eat. The Guru who had never made any distinction between one kind of food and another and took whatever was offered to him, did not refuse the courtesies of his devotee. And, he asked Mardana to roast it. The local people who normally abhorred meat eating, more so on 'auspicious' days like those of the lunar and solar eclipses, were much incensed at this. Whoever heard of this sacrilege, became furious. Some of them ran towards him with their clubs; others wanted to stone him to death. When Nanak saw an excited mob coming upon him, he asked them: "What makes you rush upon me like mad? What wrong have I done to you?" Looking at his serene gentle face, and his soothing voice, the mob was exercised all the more. "You cook meat at a place of pilgrimage, and on an auspicious day, and, then, you plead innocence as if nothing had happened?" Nanak replied: "Only they who have never seen flesh are exercised at its sight, but why should man who's conceived in flesh, and is himself nothing but flesh and bones; who is fed on the mother's breasts; who eats with the tongue of flesh, whose mouth is of flesh; who marries flesh, who produces flesh, and

breathes in flesh Is there a man of man who deals not in flesh ?”

His detractors persisted that even when man dealt with flesh and was conceived in and made up of flesh, it was a sin to eat it. The Guru replied. “Do we not all take water from which springs all life ? It gives life to man, as to the animal and to vegetation. Shall we then shun water because it produces life, is life ? And, don’t the plants have life ? They breathe, they love they live, and they die. And what is one to say of those who do not eat animal flesh, but devour men and suck their blood ?”

Most detractors knowing this man to be lost left him in disgust, while some others, more sensitive, were convinced that what he was saying was after all not without reason. Then the Guru addressed the converts thus : “O men, I do not eat for relish of the palate, but take whatever is offered to me in good faith by one who has earned with the sweat of his brow. It would be ungodly for me to refuse to eat what comes to me in God’s Will.”

At Hardwar, on the banks of the holy Ganga, he saw many people throwing water towards the east. When questioned, they said they were offering water to their dead ancestors in the high heavens for the peace of their souls. Nanak smiled, and without a moment’s hesitation, started throwing water towards the west. The devout were much amused at this unusual gesture of his, so they asked him what he was doing. Nanak replied: “I come from the western part of India. I keep a farm in my birth-place. I seek to water it from here, for I wonder if there has been sufficient rainfall since I came!” The pilgrims laughed at his innocence, and said, “You certainly are grown up and mature enough to understand that your water cannot reach that far to be of any use to your farm.” Nanak replied: “You are strange creatures. My offering

cannot reach a few hundred miles away, while yours can even get to the other world ?” The questioners became speechless, perplexed both at his impertinent questioning of their faith and the irrefutable logic behind it. Nanak made many converts here to whom he preached : “He who keeps God in the mind and does right, which is also good, his soul is ever in peace both here and in the Hereafter. He need perform no other ritual to please his God.”

At another place, he entered the cooking-square of a devout Brahmin who was wild with rage and demanded his explanation for defiling his kitchen. The Guru said, his kitchen-square was already polluted by the angry man who harboured so much hatred for his fellow-man of lower castes that at their mere presence his place was defiled. This made the Brahmin even more angry. The Guru thereupon said, “ignorance is the low-caste drummer-woman, cruelty the butcheress, a slanderous heart the sweeperess, and anger that ruins the mind is like a *chandala*. O Brahmin, it avails not if one draws the lines of one’s kitchen-square, when all the four low-castes defile one’s within.”

He, then, asked him to “make truth, self-restraint and good deed his lines, and the utterance of God’s Name his ablutions,” so that he become acceptable to his God.”

At Delhi, it is said, an elephant belonging to the emperor had died then. Its keepers were very sad, fearing loss of employment. When they heard of the Guru’s arrival, they entreated him to bring him back to life. But the Guru said, “Life and death are in the hands of God. No man can intervene in His mysterious Play. It is best to rejoice in whatever comes from Him. So long as there’s life in man, one prays for the best to one’s God; but once He wants to take life, man

should submit to His Will cheerfully.”¹

When the Guru visited Vrindavana, another great centre of Hindu pilgrimage, he saw some showmen enact Krishna *lila* (the dramatic performance representing the life of Lord Krishna). But the Guru was much dissatisfied at this dramatic show staged by people who did so not as an act of piety or dedication, but to earn their living. Said he :

“The disciples play, while the Gurus dance.

Nimble the movement of their feet, their heads,

And, lo, they throw dust in their hair, like mad.

O, all this is but to amuse the crowd !

Yea, they beat time only to satiate their hungers.

They perform for the gopis and Krishnas,

And Sitas and Ramas.

But he alone serves God on whom is God's Grace,

And in the dewy morn rises with zeal in the mind,

And dwells on the Wisdom of the truly wise

Else, do not the oil-presses dance, and the

spinning wheels ?

And the hand-mills and the potters' wheels ?

And the incessant whirlwinds in the deserts, and tops ?

And, the churning-sticks, and the threshers,

And the birds whose flying knows no rest ?

Endless are those who tumble and dance,

Bound by the writ of their habits.

But such of them who dance, only recreate their

minds, and cry and wail in the end.

For, he alone, O Nanak, loveth God who feareth Him.”

1. According to the *Puratan Janam-Sakhi* the dead elephant was brought to life by the Guru, and hearing this, the Sultan, Ibrahim Lodhi, came to see him. But, according to the Sikh credo to perform miracles is to negate God, though God may, in His Will, do whatever He chooses and make a God-aware being the instrument of His will. (See also introduction and p. 54)

III

*“Truth is above everything .
but higher still is the living of Truth ”*

—GURU NANAK

THE GURU now started on his journey towards the east. Says the earliest extant biography of his, “Nanak’s dress now was a strange motley : a mango-coloured jacket, over which he threw a white sheet, the hat like that of a Muslim anchorite (*Qalandar*), with a necklace of bones upon his neck, and a frontal-mark of saffron, imprinted on his forehead in the style of the Hindu devout.” This dress was in part Hindu, in part Muslim. But never had anyone donned it before.

On the way, they saw a Muslim notable, Sheikh Wajid, alight from a palanquin. The carriers of his palanquin and other attendants soon started fanning him, two of them kneaded his body to relieve him of fatigue. Mardana, the Guru’s companion, was greatly agitated at this and questioned his Master : “O beloved of God, pray tell me, is there no justice in this world ? The man who has travelled in a palanquin feels tired and his fatigue is being relieved by those who carried him on their shoulders !” The Guru replied : “Mardana, it is all the result of one’s deeds. God creates all men equal and blesses them with human birth when one has the opportunity to become what one may. Some avail of this opportunity, other don’t. This is how some have joy on the earth, while others suffer. But, do not mistake, O Mardana, the earthly joys to be a means to spiritual satisfaction, or even a contended life. For, in the ultimate analysis, it is spiritual fulfilment that brings real happiness and inner

integration. He who's happy now, may be unhappy tomorrow ; but a spiritually awakened and integrated mind would keep ever in joy, ever in the peace of poise."

From here, the Guru proceeded towards Pilibhit and arrived at Gorakhmata, a great centre of Yogis. Here, he sat under a pipal tree which had long withered with age. It is said, this tree became green soon after, much to the wonderment of the people around. The Siddhas of this place engaged Nanak in a religious discourse asking him who he was and whose disciple. The Guru asked Mardana to play on the rebeck while he himself sang the following hymn of his :

"O, God, is there a scale or a weighman, or a measure or a tester of Thee ?

"Is there an evaluator to put value on Thee ? Is there a Guru to make me wise in Thee ?

"O love, I know not Thy limits.

"For, Thou it is who pervadest the earth, the waters the underworlds and the skies, and art contained in all that is."

Asked, how then one was to know God, to see Him and to release Him, the Guru replied :

"The mind is the scale, understanding the weight, and His service the weighman. And within the heart is He to be weighted and seen and dwelt upon.

Nay, He Himself is the balance, and the tongue, and the weight, and the weighman. And Himself He sees Himself, and realises too, and deals in Himself.

But, he who's blind, and of low disposition, and a stranger to His ways, and ever wobbles in the mind, how can he and those who seek his company ever know the state or extent of God?"

The Yogis said what he had said might be true, but Realisation came only through *their* way. They therefore, asked

him to adopt their dress, and the yogic discipline to obtain emancipation from the snares of life and to enter into the super-conscious state of "*Samadhi*", where there's all bliss and joy. The Guru replied :

"Yoga consists not in a patched gown, nor in the Yogi's staff, nor in smearing one's body with ashes, nor in the ear-rings, nor a shaven head, nor in blowing of the horn. "Yea, he alone knows the way who abides amidst the impurities of the world and yet remains detached and spotless.

"Yoga consists not in words :

For, he alone is a Yogi who looks upon all men as equal;
And dies while yet alive,

And hears the Unstruck Melody, and enters into the state of

fearlessness, when one's Doubt is dispelled, and cease the outgoings of the mind :

And Nectar rains upon one's mind, and oozes the music of equipoise within one,

And one comes to know oneself."

The Yogis were now completely transformed and paid homage to the Guru.

From here, Nanak and his bard, Mardana, proceeded to Banaras, far-famed as the holiest of Hindu centres of pilgrimage. This birthplace of Kabir and Ravidasa, two renowned devotees of God, and a great centre of Sanskrit learning, housed a learned Pandit, Chatur Das by name. While going towards the Ganga for a holy dip, he saw the Guru in his unusual dress and said with a sneer: "What kind of a holy man are you? - You neither wear the necklace of *Tulsi*, nor have a rosary in your hand, nor possess a *saligrama*, the sacred quartz stone representing the god Vishnu. How will you be emancipated?" The Guru answered:

“He who waters a barren land wastes his life. O Brahmin, make God the object of thy worship, and right conduct the necklace of Tulsi, and ride the boat of God’s Love with prayer in the heart for His Mercy and you will be ferried across.”

The Guru continued :

“He who seeks to belong to the Master of the Garden, makes deeds his well, the necklace and the waterpots, and yokes his mind, like an ox, to draw water from the well, and thus irrigates his farm with the Lord’s Nectar and fulfils himself.”

The Brahmin said : “What you say may be true, but how is one to overcome one’s mind which is full of lust and wrath ?” The Guru replied : “Lust and wrath too can be beaten into a ploughshare, being nothing but energy. Instead of their riding the man, man should ride them.”

The Brahmin then asked : “Can a crane be changed ever into a swan ? How can man who is ill-destined due to his past Karma turn the course of his life ?” The Guru replied : “If God’s Grace be upon one, one’s past is totally obliterated. And Grace comes to all who seek it in humility, through self-surrender, and the knowledge of, and obedience to, the Will of God.”

The Pandit said, “But how can knowledge come without learning?” The Guru answered: “Knowing is not understanding, intellect does not always lead to wisdom, for the body is too weak, and the heart too young to resist evil. That is how one acquires two mothers (hope and desire), and two fathers (attachment and envy).”

Chatur Das questioned: “If that be so, what is the hope of man’s redemption?” The Guru replied: “Know you not that while the vegetation is in bloom, it yet has fire within it? The earth is bounded by the sea and yet is not washed away?

The sun and the moon reside in the same sky. But, the one does not imbibe the nature of the other.” Chatur Das then asked what were the characteristics of the God-awakened being. The Guru replied: “He who knows God to be all-pervasive, and eats up the illusion that surrounds us all. And the hallmark of such a one is that he always has compassion in his heart.”

The Pandit then inquired if his learning and teaching would be of any avail to him in the realisation of the Ultimate Reality. The Guru uttered 54 stanzas on the nature of knowledge and of God, reiterating his belief that there was nothing that did not come from God: the gods, angels, mind, wisdom, the universe, man, good and evil. “Why therefore get involved with the Other, one must write out and reflect only upon God’s Name.” When asked how was this God to be realised, the Guru said, “Through love. For he who loves God knows not another: he looks upon all alike, has compassion for all life, and illusion lures him not, and he is content to be himself.”

The Pandit was greatly impressed by the Guru and became his disciple.

The Guru, then, proceeded to Gaya, the far-famed place where Gautama, the Buddha, had performed his penances. This place was now taken over by the Brahmins who asked Nanak to perform customary ceremonies for the spiritual comfort of his dead ancestors. The Guru replied :

“God’s Name is my earthen lamp, and sorrow is the oil that burns therein. The more the lamp burns bright the more my sorrows are consumed, and lo, I suffer not the agony of Death thereafter.

“God’s Name, again, is the rice-balls, the leafy bowls,

and obsequies and the holy rivers and the ablutions.¹ While men offer gifts to the gods, it is the Brahmin who eats them. Instead, one must beg of God to grant peace to his soul both here and in the Hereafter, for there's nothing like His Love."

As they proceeded further, they passed through a town in which celebrations were being held on a lavish scale on the birth of a child in the house of a rich merchant. Next morning, the child passed away and there was much wailing and crying. Mardana asked the Guru, "O Master, why is man afflicted by joy and sorrow, almost by turns, and how is one to find peace in this world where men are born only to pass out of life?" The Guru replied: "It is only one's lack of understanding which makes one indulge in joys of life excessively, and when these pass away man suffers. If one were to meditate on God Who goes not, and keep himself even-minded, both in joy and pain, taking both to be the blessings of God, one stays in poise and does not suffer." He, then, uttered a hymn giving the four stages of man's life: childhood, youth, old age and death, comparing them with the four divisions of night which make one forget oneself, as in sleep, and then when one wakes up, one repents.

On the way, the Guru halted at a place where he was visited regularly by a devotee of his. Another man wanted to follow suit, but falling in love with a woman of ill-repute, he forsook the Guru's path and indulged in revelries. After some time, this man on his way to the house of his paramour once found a pot full of gold mohurs, while the devotee of the Guru ran a poisonous thorn in his foot. He reported this to his Master, saying, "O Guru, he who comes thy way is punished while he

1. These are some of the many rites performed by the orthodox Hindus to propitiate their dead ancestors.

who visits the house of evil is rewarded with gold coins! Strange are the ways of God!" The Guru remarked : "My son, ask thy heart if it feels contentment and bliss within, by sticking to the way of God, and ask also the other man if he has the same inner peace and poise, or burns ever in the fire of desire and lust. It is not one's worldly affluence that makes for a happy and contended life, but what gives one's mind and heart stability and equilibrium. Your friend will grieve the moment his joys are snatched away, but you possess riches that would go not, nor be burnt nor drowned, and would stay with you. Men who go for the pleasures of the moment lose the joy of the everlasting."

The Guru now came to a village where men and women served him with all their heart. The Guru blessed them thus : "May ye all scatter !" At the next village he was very poorly received. The Guru cursed them saying : "May ye remain where ye are !" Mardana was greatly perplexed at this. He asked : "O Master, strange are thy ways. They who serve you, you want them to scatter, while the others who treat you ill, you want them to stay in their homes secure and whole ?" The Guru replied : "O Mardana, if those that serve others scatter, they would, by their example, make others also likewise; while if those that are inhospitable to the wayfarers and the holy, stay where they did, at least they wouldn't corrupt others by their bad manners."

The Guru now reached Kamrup (in Assam). The women of this region were famous for their feminine charm and skill in enticing men. Nur Shah was the queen of this haven of beauty. Mardana, as usual, stung by hunger, asked the Guru's permission to visit the town. When he reached the palatial abode of the queen of beauty, she called him in, taking him to be an innocent creature on whom she would work her charms. Mardana, seeing her dazzling figure and much pleased

with her courtesan manners, was completely possessed by her. When, for quite some time, he did not return, the Guru went after him, and finding him a virtual prisoner in the hands of a handsome maiden, tried to persuade her to let his companion out. But she was adamant saying his man had chosen her out of free will and so she would not let him go. She even tried to entice the Guru by her charm and suave manners. But, the Guru spurned her advances saying . "She who sells dust cannot exchange her goods with musk. Without worthy deeds, one finds not the True Spouse."

Nur Shah then tried to dance her way into the approval of Nanak. She made such graceful and tender gestures, so nimble of feet was she and so exquisite in her make-up and expression that it was impossible for the usual run of men to resist her charm. But the Guru sat unmoved and sang.

"The desires of the heart clang like cymbals and the ankle-bells, and the world's drum beats with it to keep the time. Such are the times that even the sages dance to their tune. O God, where then are the men of continence to plant their feet ? All joys, all blessings, are bought and sold, but how long is one to enjoy and forsake his inner being and God ? Men are without compassion and kings without justice. Their appearance is human but their doings are of dogs. But he alone is approved who thinks himself to be a guest in this garden of beauty and is not enticed away from God !"

Then Nur Shah asked her companions to corrupt Nanak with their riches. Thereupon they brought gold, jewels, scents, dresses and delicacies to please him and make him stay with them as their master and slave. But, the Guru was not at all impressed and uttered the following hymn :

"O ignorant woman, why are you proud of your beauty, your riches ? Why not relish the Spouse of your heart within you, yea, He who is nearer than near, but Whom you

searchest without and afar. Let His fear be the collyrium for the eyes and your decoration be of His Love. But if you love Him not, and play clever with Him and try to please Him through courtesan manners and have greed in your mind, then you please Him not only. If you surrender to His Will with all your heart, and be yoked ever to His Feet and offer your body and mind to Him, then your Lord loves and owns you as His very own. Says Nanak : she alone is beautiful and meritorious and clever and wise who merges her whole being in her Love."

It is said, Nur Shah was deeply moved by the soul-stirring message of Nanak, and stood before him with joined palms, beseeching him to forgive her past and to accept her as his disciple. This the Guru did, saying "If you keep God in your mind in whatever you do, you will be blessed and emancipated." She also released Mardana who sought Nanak's benediction so that he remained steadfast in the Guru's Path.

From here the Guru and his associate proceeded towards wilderness. A strong wind was howling in the wastes, uprooting the age-old trees. Soon, there was torrential rain and thunder and lightning. The sky became murky and dreadful as if with the streaks of fire and blood. Mardana was struck with terror and said, "O Guru, strange are thy ways. You've brought me to a wilderness where, if I die, there'll be no one even to bury me gracefully and, may be, my flesh becomes a prey for wild animals." Nanak smiled and said, "Mardana, life and death are in the hands of God whose fear fills the earth, the sky and all the elements. So, whosoever is attached to His fearless and eternal Master, he comes not to grief."

As they were discussing thus, it is said, they saw a wild being, half-human in form, but very dreadful of features and demeanour approach them. The Guru said, "O brother, who are you ? Why have you come to us at this unearthly hour ?"

He replied. "I am the spirit of the Kali age and have come to entice you. All the dreadful things you have seen happen before you this day were my doings. But, as you weren't afraid, now I've come to offer you gold and jewels and palatial mansions and houris of exquisite beauty for your pleasure, so that you may follow my way, and so too others seeing thy example."

The Guru asked Mardana to play upon the rebeck and uttered the following hymn :

"Were there a mansion of pearls inlaid with gems, and perfumed with musk, saffron, fragrant aloes and sandalwood...

Were the earth to be studded with diamonds and rubies:
Were houris of exquisite beauty shining like a bead to please me with their delicate gestures, I'd leave not the hand of my God, nor abandon the support of His Name!
Were I to become a *Siddha*, seated in a holy trance, and work miracles,

And could become now manifest, now hidden, at will, and people were to acclaim me for this,
I'd leave not the hand of my God, nor abandon the support of His Name !

Were I to become a monarch, seated on a throne, with large armies to obey my commands,

O Nanak, all that would be vain like wind.

For, I'd ask God still to give me His Hand."

It is said, the demon on seeing Nanak thus spurn his offers fell at his feet and said, "O Nanak, I may bless him who follows thee with the world's riches, but would disturb not the peace of his mind."

The Guru now returned by the river Brahmaputra and proceeded towards Puri on the Bay of Bengal where Vishnu or Krishna is worshipped as Jagannatha, or the Lord of the

universe. When, in the evening, the priests started performing the *Arti*, going round and round the idol of Jagannatha, with earthen lamps placed in salvers of silver, and burnt incense to make the atmosphere fragrant, the Guru asked : "What's this all about ?" The priests replied : "This is how one pays homage to the Lord of the universe. You should also participate in the service as do the others." The Guru thereupon uttered a hymn, one of the most beautiful in the whole gamut of Indian mystic poetry :

"The sky is the salver, the sun and the moon are the lamps
with the spheres of stars studded in it like jewels :

The sandalwood on the Malai mountain scatters its fragrance across, and the winds waft the scents of all the flowers of the earth :

Thus is Thy worship performed, O Thou destroyer of fear.
The Unstruck Melody of Thy Word ringeth through all
Thy universe.

Thousands are Thy eyes, yet hast Thou eyes ?

Thousands Thy forms, yet hast Thou a form ?

Thousands Thy feet, yet hast Thou feet ?

Thousands Thy noses to smell, yet hast Thou a nose, O wonder of wonders ?

Thou art the light that lights all hearts, and becomes manifest through the instruction of the Guru.

O man, that alone is worship which pleases my God ! Like the black bee, my mind craves for the honey of His Lotus—feet,

And cries :

"O God, bless Nanak, Thy Cuckoo, with the rain of Thy Mercy,

That he merges in thy Name !"

The priests of the temple found it profitless to argue any more with him and left him alone.

At Puri, Nanak also met a Brahmin who kept his eyes and nose closed so as to deny himself the pleasures of the senses. It was his claim that thus he achieved much mental concentration and could divine the secrets of others. The Guru put his claim to the test. He took away the jug of water lying in front of him, placed it at his back and asked, "Could you find out where's your jug?" After making many guesses, the Brahmin gave up. The Guru thereupon uttered the following hymn for his instruction :

"Men know not the spirit of the times, nor the essence of
Yoga, nor the way of Truth.

The holy places have been corrupted and defiled; lo, the
whole world is drowned thus.

In the Kali age, the way to man's Release is through God's
Love,

In vain do men hold their nose and close their eyes and
claim that they see the three worlds,

But they see not what's behind them, O, what a miracle is
this ?"

IV

*“Only the Saint uttereth truly,
for he uttereth what he see-eth ”*

—GURU ARJUN

The Guru now returned to the Panjab. He dressed himself like a householder and visited the shrine of Sheikh Farid-ud-Din, *Ganj-i-Shakar*, a great Muslim Sufi of the 13th century, at Pak Pattan. The custodian of the shrine, Seikh Brahm (Ibrahim), seeing him robed like a householder, said :

“Either one should covet the world, or God,
But, one must place not one’s feet in two
boats, lest one be drowned.”

Nanak answered :

“Why not make use of both : have one’s goods, in one, and
one’s soul in the other.

For such a one, there’s no wreck, no loss : neither one sees
the boat, nor the water !

He cherishes only the goods of God which’s True and
pervades all, all-too-spontaneously.”

Ibrahim then engaged him in a spiritual dialogue, employing various metaphors and symbols to convey his belief about God, man and the world. He said : “The whole world is enamoured of the ‘witch’ which is false from within, and as one looks on, one’s ‘farm’ is ruined !”

The Guru answered back in the same metaphor: “Men have been in love with the ‘witch’ since the beginning of Time. But, he who keeps a watch over his ‘farm’ will never see it ruined.”

Said Ibrahim : "My strength is gone, my mind is torn, my body ceases to function. O love, bring me a medicament that may cure me of my ailment."

Replied Nanak: "Thy physician is Truth, and is within thee, not without. To utter Him or to call Him from without is false : one must Realise Him within one's soul."

Sheikh Ibrahim wailed : "When there was time to construct a boat, I didn't. And, now when the river is in flood, how can I carry myself across ? O love, touch not the safflower,¹ its colour will fade away. The soul is weak, and the command of the Beloved hard to bear. As the cow once milked yields not again, so also our single life. The call from beyond calls, and the swan-soul is sad that it hath to pass and the dust return to dust."

Nanak replied in a most optimistic tone. "If one constructs the boat of meditation and self-discipline, the crossing is easy enough. Then, one meets not with an angry river, and the path is all-too-smooth. He who gathers merit in his skirt, the God of Himself owns him and forsakes him never, if he gives up ego and evil."

Sheikh Ibrahim then said: "I seem to agree with you. But, the tree of life yields flower in the first part of the night, and it fruitions in the morn. And he alone is blessed who keeps awake through the night."

Nanak replied: "The bounties are in the hands of God, the Giver. Some He passes by, even though they are awake, other He wakes up out of sleep and blesses."

Explaining his point further, Nanak said, "If man were to receive Bliss only as a result of his own effort, what need, then, is there of God and His Grace ? Effort one must make, but the fruits thereof must be surrendered to God. Only thus

¹ i.e. The passing show of the world.

does one's ego depart and one merits the Grace of God. Else, the realm of the spirit also degenerates into a market place of of give-and-take." And, then, he uttered the following hymn :

"When Thou, O God, art with me, I have everything,
For, Thou, O love, art my capital-stock.

When I abide within Thee, I'm at peace and feel blessed.

In Thy Will Thou blessest man with a throne and glory.

In Thy Will Thou makest man a beggar, sad at heart.

In Thy Will do rivers flow across the deserts.

In Thy Will doth the lotus flower in the (mind's) sky.

In Thy Will do we cross the impassable sea

(of material existence.)

In Thy Will are we drowned in the midstream.

In Thy Will Thou seemest pure and beauteous, and one is
imbued utterly with Thy Praise.

In Thy Will Thou seemest dreadful and one exhausts one-
self coming and going

O Love, Thou art unfathomable, incomparable without an
equal,

And saying thus, I surrender myself to Thee.

O God, I ask nought from Thee, but for Thy

Vision I crave."

It is said Sheikh Ibrahim, like his illustrious predecessor, Baba Farid, *Ganj-i-Shakar*, used to fast for as many days as he possibly could. This he did in order to obtain religious merit and purge his mind of desire even for bread. Whenever anyone would bring offerings to him, more often than not he would refuse the offer saying "I've already eaten." He did this once in the presence of the Guru. The giver, much offended, taunted him : "Do you also imitate the ways of your forbear who even though he wore on his stomach a wooden cake in order to give him false comfort of bread, used to pretend he had eaten even though his mind always craved?" Sheikh

Ibrahim's heart was much touched at this reproach and he said to the Guru : "Pray tell me what is to become of me ? I lie when I actually fast and tell the people that I have indeed taken my dinner, while my mind craves."

The Guru replied : "It is a sin to deny oneself the necessities of life. One must not crave for pleasures, but whatever comes from God one must accept with good grace and thankfulness. Starvation never leads to spiritual bliss." And he quoted Kabir in support of his argument : "He who forsakes bread and pretends God's love, has, neither the merit of a wedded spouse nor of a chaste widow " Nanak added : "Without a well-nurtured body, God could not be cherished or realised." The essentials on the path of spiritual ascent were not fasting or self-denial, but self-surrender, contentment, compassion and sweet humility.

The Sheikh was much pleased with this discourse.

From here, the Guru and Mardana ventured through a small desert where they could find nothing to eat. Mardana, much distressed, asked his Master : "Pray, tell me what is to become of me ? I came out with you in the hope that at least you wouldn't starve me to death. Now, hunger gnaws at my heart, and there's nothing I can find to have my fill." The Guru pointed to some wild berries and asked him to satisfy his hunger with these, but not to carry any with him. Mardana ate his heartful, but disregarding the instructions of the Guru, put some in his pockets and as he felt hungry next morning partook of them with utter abandon. Soon after, he felt pain in his stomach and became miserable. Being asked, he told Nanak that disregarding his advice he had brought some wild berries with him also and eaten them while he felt hungry that morning. The Guru smiled and said, "Mardana, that's how man suffers. He not only demands what he needs now, but also what he needs for the morrow, depending not on God but

on himself. And the food he thus accumulates and deposits gets stale, even if it is not stolen, or gives rise to jealousy and pain in the minds of others. And so whosoever feeds himself on the left-overs suffers." Mardana was soon well, but now expressed a wish to go back home. "I can suffer hunger with thee no more," he wailed. Nanak said: "Mardana, I bless thee. You are saved both in this world and the next. You gave me devotion before any other and this I value more than my life. You may now proceed to your home in peace." Mardana touched the feet of his Master, and Nanak hugged him to his bosom, saying to his utter delight : "You go and I follow you, but tell no one of my whereabouts."

When Mardana reached Talwandi, Nanak's mother greatly overwhelmed with emotion asked : "Where have you left my son ? Pray tell me, when shall I see his blessed face again ?" Mardana kept silent, and after meeting his people soon left.

Nanak's mother followed him, believing that his sudden departure must be at the bidding of Nanak who might be somewhere nearabout. At only three miles from the village, Mardana halted and so did Nanak's mother who to her utter delight saw her son face to face after several years. Nanak, seeing the sight of his mother, rushed to touch her feet. The mother embraced him and tenderly caressing his forehead, sobbed : "Sacrifice to thee, O son, blessed is the ground thou treadest, blessed the people thou meetest, thy mother is blessed for having brought thee forth. Thank God, I have seen thee again."

Nanak was also much overcome with emotion. The mother offered him some sweets, but Nanak said, "Mother, I'm already satiated." The mother inquired : "O son, what have you eaten and when ?" Nanak asked Mardana to play on the rebeck while he sang a hymn which said, "He who believes, tastes all that's sweet ; he who hears His Word tastes all that's

saline. He who utters Him, tastes the sour foods, and he who sings His Praise tastes all the condiments. Yea, all the thirty-six delicacies that the tongue relishes are his who loves God, and whose love my God approves. All other tastes are vain, O mother, for they bring evil to the mind and to the body pain."

Then, his mother said, "Son, remove the beggar's gown you've put on and wear the clothes I've brought thee." Nanak replied : "The joy of wearing red is his who's imbued with the colour of God, of wearing white his, who lives in Truth and gives away whatever he has. The joy of wearing blue is his who rids interior of the dark spots, and of the cosy footwear his who stands ever in the Presence of God."

Soon, his father got scent of Nanak's coming and he rushed to the spot on horseback. Seeing Nanak robed like a faqir, he said, "Son, take my horse and ride back to thy home. I'm much distressed at thy sight, the son of a proud householder wandering like a beggar." Nanak fell at the feet of his father and said, "O father, the horses are no use to me He who knows His Way, goes not another He whose glory shines in the Presence of God by His Grace feels himself to be the king of the world." Kalu, then, asked him to visit at least his people back home and comfort his bones for sometime in the family house. Nanak replied, "The pleasure of uttering His Name is my home, my family is my God's Grace. And only that I obey which my Master ordains."

Kalu was much distressed to hear these words and said, "Only if I know what has disappointed you in life, I would set things right. If you want to marry another woman, I'd get you one, if another house, I'd provide you with it " Nanak replied : "God alone I have married. He it is who orders me about, as the whole world he yokes, each to his own task. And whosoever else errs, my God errs not." Nanak then asked

his parents' permission to depart : "I had promised to come and see you. That promise I have kept. Now, I beg of you to grant me leave that I do what God bids me do." Finding any further argument fruitless, his parents departed, sad at heart.

Once again, the Guru went to see Sheikh Ibrahim at Pak Pattan. Outside the town, the Guru sat along with Mardana, singing a hymn which said : 'Thou art the tablet, O God, Thou the pen, Thou also the writing. Yea, Thou art our only God, why therefore think of another ?' This utterance a follower of Sheikh Ibrahim heard and reported to this master that Nanak had arrived again in the neighbourhood. Sheikh Ibrahim went out to receive him and after paying courtesies to him asked, "Nanak, thou sayest there's but one God ; true, but there are two ways : which one must one adopt and which reject ?" The Guru replied : "If there's one God, then, there's only *His* Way to attain Him, not another. One must follow that way and reject the other. Worship not him who's born only to die, but Him Who's eternal and is contained in the whole universe."

Ibrahim quoted Farid-ud-Din, *Ganj-i-Shakar*, to convey that without abandoning the world, one couldn't go the way of God. Nanak replied that he whose mind was clean would attain God wheresoever he be. The Sheikh then asked, "What is that word, that virtue, that spell, which captivates the heart of the Beloved ?" Nanak replied : "Humility is the word, forbearance the virtue, civility the spell which charms the heart of our Master" Ibrahim asked, "How can a man of affairs who lives on the blood of others be approved of by God ?" Nanak replied, "If one keeps the 'knife' of Truth in the scabbard of Merit and then cuts one's 'throat' with it, the 'blood' of greed will be shed and one shall be approved by God." Asked Ibrahim, "Is an intercessor necessary to meet with God ?" Nanak

replied, "The pure soul is the intercessor. God Himself is the Guru and he who surrenders his soul to God becomes like unto Him." The Sheikh then asked for his blessings and Nanak said, "God will bless thee, and thy goods will arrive safe home," meaning thereby that his devotion would be accepted.

On the way, the Guru was met by a recluse who asked him to define the word "*Udas*" (Abandonment). Nanak answered : "He who makes use of everything but deems not any as his own has abandoned the world. Such a one meets with God."

At Goindwal, he visited the house of a leper whom everyone had discarded and left to live on the outskirts of the village. Nanak stayed here for some time, nursing the ailing man who was in utter distress. The leper asked him, "O Guru, how does man contract disease?" The Guru replied, "By forgetting God, for the malady is not in our body but in our souls. While man can cure his body's ailments, only God can cure our souls. He whose soul is in health, minds not the body's pain, but he who leans only on the body, keeps his soul ever in pain." It is said, the leper recovered soon thereafter, and became a great devotee of God.

V

“God created the earth to establish His Rule of Law “

—GURU NANAK

CONTINUING HIS WANDERINGS through the central parts of the Panjab, Nanak arrived at Sayyadpur and visited his devotee, Bhai Lalo, a second time. Lalo complained to Guru of the oppression of the Pathan rulers. Nanak replied, “When goodness departs from men and nations, they invariably come to grief. The end of the Pathan regime is at hand.” And, on this occasion, he uttered a prophetic hymn pointing to the advent of Babur who was soon to occupy the throne of Delhi after bitter fighting in the Panjab Addressing Lalo,¹ Nanak sang :

“O Lalo, I utter as is revealed unto me the Word of God :

With the “marriage-procession” of sin, Babur hastens hither and asks for the hand (of the bride, our motherland) at the point of the sword.

Men have lost religion, nay, even the sense of shame, and falsehood walks abroad.

Not the Brahmins and the Qazis, but the devil incarnate conducts the marriage.

Women, Hindu or Muslim, sing the “marriage-songs” through their wails.

1. Though no mention is made of Lalo in the oldest chronicle—the *Puratan Janam Shakhī*—the tradition with regard to him persists which is performed by this hymn in the Sikh scripture and references to him in the later records.

And men sing of their killers, and anoint their foreheads
with the saffron-mark of blood.

Nanak hymns the praises of God in the city of the flesh.

And proclaims that He whose justice is ever true and who
assigns to each man his task, He sits apart and watches
over us all.

And, lo, our bodies will be torn into shreds, and, then,
Hindustan will know the intent of what I utter.”

A few days later, Babur invaded this place, sacked the
town, put many men to the sword, and captured others, in-
cluding Nanak and Mardana. While the Guru was made to
carry a heavy load on the head, Mardana worked as a groom.
Later, Nanak was asked to grind corn at a hand-worked stone-
mill. While other prisoners cried and groaned as they laboured,
Nanak sang hymns in praise of God¹ one of which said :

“O God, I am Thy bond slave : How fortunate am I that
Thou hast bought me over
At Thy shop ; and, in return, blessed me with Thy Word.
Now, I serve Thee as Thou wantest me to serve.
O, God, how can Thy slave play clever with Thee ?
There is no choice for him but to submit to Thy
Will, and never, never to say, Why ?
O Love, my father is also Thy slave, so also my
mother : I am the offspring of Thy slaves :
And as my mother danceth, and my father
singeth, I, too, pay my devotions to Thee.
O Master, if Thou art thirsty, I bring Thee water;
if hungry, I grind corn for Thee,

1. Some of the chronicles suggest that some of the prisoners saw Nanak's load lifted above his head and his stone-mill moving without being worked, while Nanak sat composed in a trance or danced for joy. We have seen the broken stone-mill in a Sikh Gurudwara at Kabul which is believed to be the same as mentioned here.

And wave ~~a fan~~ over Thee, and caress Thy feet,
 and utter ever Thy Name.
 O God, I have betrayed Thy salt, but, Thou forgivest
 and blessest me with glory.
 For, Thou art ever compassionate, the great Giver,
 since the beginning of Time; and no one hath
 found Release without Thee."

When this was reported to Mir Khan, the army General, that a faqir was dancing for joy over the labour he was entrusted with, he conveyed it to Babur. The Emperor said he would like the faqir to be brought to his presence and expressed distress that such a one should have been put to hardship. When Nanak was presented to Babur, and the latter asked for his forgiveness, Nanak sang :

"They whose tresses shone with lusture, their
 partings lined with vermillion,
 Their locks were sheared, and dust was thrown on
 their head.
 They who lived in palaces do not find a place now
 in the common :
 O God, greetings to Thee !
 O Primal Being, no one knows Thy limits; Thou
 donnest as many garbs as there are.
 Beauty and riches which led men to much revelry
 now have turned their enemies.
 If only one were to forethink,
 one would come not to grief !"

Then Babur asked, "I've come to invade India, to release people from the oppression of the Pathans." The Guru said, "True, but you will go to the same way if you oppress your subjects. These riches and lust for power have wasted away many people before thee. They come not without sin, but they keep no one's company for ever. And, whosoever loses

goodness of heart, him my God destroyeth.” Babur was impressed with these words and said, “O man of God, forgive my sins. I Promise thee not to commit oppression on the poor any more.” The Guru took leave of him, saying, “Let God be thy light.”

As they came to the town of Sayyadpur, Mardana heard much wailing of men and women for their dear ones who had been massacred by the hordes of Babur. He asked the Guru why so many innocent men were done to death alongwith those few who were guilty. The Guru asked Mardana to relax under a banyan tree, and after a while when he came back he would answer him. As Mardana reclined under the tree, he dozed off. And, then, suddenly, the bite of an ant awakened him. In one sweep of the hand, Mardana rubbed on his feet, as many ants as he could find, thus killing several of them. Nanak saw this, and before Mardana could ask for the answer to his question, Nanak said to him : “You now know, Mardana, why do the innocents suffer along with the guilty ?” Mardana said, “O Master, thou alone knowest thy mystries.” Seeing much distress all around, Nanak asked Mardana to play on the rebeck and himself sang the following hymn :

“O God, Thou protected Khurasan, and brought
terror to Hindustan.

But Thou taken no blame for this, and sent the
Moghals to bring ruin and death unto us.

O God, when men suffer thus, and wail,
Thou feelest no pain ?

O Creator, Thou belongest to all.

If the powerful duel with the powerful,
one minds it not.

But, if a ravenous lion pounces upon a herd of cows,
the Master must answer for it.

They who have spoiled the priceless jewel of Ind

and behaved like curs, will be wiped from
memory after they are gone.

O God, Thou Thyself unitest and the separatist men
from Thee,

For such is Thy glory.

If someone has a great name, and enjoys himself
to his heart's desire,

He is treated by Thee like a worm, who eats
(but thinketh not).

But he who dies while yet alive and lives in Thy
Love alone wins."

It is said when Babur heard of this, he once again invited the Guru to meet him, and offered to grant him anything he asked for. Nanak said, "It's only fools who ask anything from one other than God." When Babur pressed his request several times, in great humility, Nanak asked him to release the prisoners he had taken. This the Emperor did. Now, Babur offered him wine. But, the Guru refused it saying, "that which intoxicates a man for a little while and then leaves him cold frustrated is of no use to me. I'm inebriated with something more enduring than this." Babur misunderstood him, and offered him *hashish* (Indian hemp) instead. The Guru, much amused, sang the following hymn to explain himself :

"Love is my hemp, my heart its pouch :

O God, I'm mad after Thee, estranged from the rest.

With prayerful hands as the bowl, it is for the

Vision of Thee I beg at Thy door.

O Love, grant me the alms I ask for.

Saffron, flowers, musk and sandal make everyone
fragrant,

So do the Saints with the fragrance of their souls.

No one says butter can be defiled, or silk.

So also the soul of the devotee whichever caste
houses it.

O God, grant Nanak the alms of Thy Mercy,
That he may ever be imbued with Thy Name and
forsake Thee never."

The Guru then took leave of the Emperor saying that if he would be just and revere the holy and indulge not in pleasure and be merciful to the poor and remember God in everything he did, he would come not to grief and his rule would last long.

Nanak now proceeded towards Sialkot *via* Pasrur. Here he rested under a wild caper tree which still stands to his memory. He told Mardana to go to the town and ask at every shop: "My Master wants to buy a penny worth of truth, and a penny worth of falsehood." Mardana was much amused at this strange request, but did not cross the Master believing that he might be wanting to teach him some new aspect of Truth. Going from shop to shop he put this question. Some considered him insane, others, that he was trying to make fun of them. But one shopkeeper, Moola by name, was much overwhelmed with this kind of questioning and said, "Go, tell thy Master that life (of the self) is false, and death (in the way of God) true." When Mardana brought this answer to his Guru, Nanak said, "Such a sensitive soul I would like to see. It appears he knows the Reality." Moola was brought to the presence of the Guru who wanted him to accompany him on his travels. This he did for some time. But, when the Guru visited his town a second time and asked for his whereabouts, Moola's wife fearing that he might leave her again lied that he had left for a distant land. Moola too, it appears, had despaired of his wanderings where he could not be treated even to a good feast. Than to die in wilderness, he seems to have thought, it was better to stay at home in comfort with his family. The

Guru sensing that he was being cheated, said, "This man used to protest that life for the self is false and death in the way of good is real, but now he too seeks to cling to falsehood. So, let it be. But who can escape death ?"

Travelling thence to Mithankot, Nanak came to meet Mian Mittha (lit. the sweet one), a great Muslim Sufi, who contrary to what his name implied was very proud of his station. When told of the arrival of Nanak, he said to his followers : "I'd go to see him, and squeeze him dry like a lemon." When he came, Nanak greeted him with much courtesy. Mian Mittha asked haughtily: "O Nanak, there are only two things which if a man accepts he's approved by God, one, God Himself and the other, The Prophet. But you accept not the second, nor read the Quran. How are you then to be redeemed ?" Nanak replied, "It is the Quran of Right Conduct that I read, and as I live in God, I lean not on another For, he who is in love with the One loves not another."

Mian Mittha then asked, "How can a lamp be lighted without oil ?" Meaning thereby that without the aid of the holy book, the Quran, how could one's interior be illumined ? Nanak answered : "The (body's) lamps, if in it be the oil of wisdom, and the wick be of God's Fear, and if it be lighted with the torch of Truth, its lights illumines our within, and we see God. Yea, he who while he liveth serveth others, he getteth a seat in the Presence of God."

Then, Mittha asked, "What is Wisdom ? How is one to fear God ? How is the torch of Truth to be lighted ? What indeed is Truth ?" Nanak answered : "To love is to be wise ; to surrender to it, in all humility, is to fear God, to believe

1. It is said Moola died soon thereafter bitten by a snake, as he was cursed by the Guru. This cannot be true, as the Guru did not believe in cursing people who did not follow him.

in it is to light the torch, and to know that He alone is in everyone and everything is to know the only Truth one ought to know.”

Then Mian Mittha asked, “What’s the name of God that’s most sacred to Him, which pleases Him most ?” Nanak replied, “Any with which one can be involved For Thee, it is Allah.” And uttering “Allah” thrice to him, Nanak took his leave, leaving Mittha a much chastened man

The Guru now visited Lahore. Here, a multi-millionaire, Duni Chand by name, had planted scores of flagstaffs in front of his door. When asked what they stood for, someone explained that each flag denoted a hundred thousand rupees that the rich man possessed. Duni Chand heard of the arrival of the holy man and wishing him to partake of the feast he had arranged in honour of his dead father, requested him most profusely to grace the occasion. Nanak agreed, but said, “ I would come if only I received an answer to my query from you.” “What is that ?” inquired Duni Chand in all humility. Nanak said, “I would partake of your feast if you take from me a small needle I have cherished all my life and deliver it safe to me in the after-life.” “How can that be ?” asked Duni Chand, “how can one carry things of this world into the beyond ?” Nanak asked, “Then, why have you made such a display of wealth at your door if you cannot take even a little needle along with you into the beyond ?” Duni Chand was much ashamed at this reckless advertisement of his riches and, as directed by the Guru, distributed all he had to the poor and dedicated himself to meditation and service of the helpless.

The Guru now came to Kartarpur on the bank of the Ravi and settled here for some time. A young boy, seven years of age, used to visit the Guru every morning and evening. One day, Nanak asked him what made him come to him at

such an early age. The boy replied · “I have seen my mother lighting firewood. And it is the little sticks that burned first. That made me realise that one knows not when one’s life comes to an end. So, one must start on the God’s way soon enough.” Nanak was much pleased at this reply. This boy, who lived to a hoary age, and became a renowned savant and later anointed the five successors to the Throne of Nanak, has since then been known as “Baba Buddha” (the revered old one), due to his maturity even at his tender age

Hearing of the Guru’s settlement at Kartarpur, men and women came from far and near to pay their homage. His fame had spread to the four corners of Hindustan. Even his father came with all his people, his wife, children, mother and relations. Nanak took off his unusual robes and dressed himself in the way of the world, a turban on his head, a sheet of cloth over his shoulders, a cover round his waist. Morning and evening, religious services were performed. He also started cultivation of a farm and out of its produce food was offered to whosoever came to see him. Thus was laid the foundation of a community-kitchen (or, Guru-ka-langar) in which everyone, high or low, caste or no caste, and men of all creeds, were made to eat together, perhaps for the first time in our history. One day, a Brahmin came to the Guru and asked for alms. He was directed to take food in the community-kitchen along with others. But, he refused, saying unless he cooked himself what he ate he would be defiled ! First, he would dig up the earth, then mark off and plaster the kitchen-square with cow-dung, wash the firewood so that no insect be burnt with it, and then cook his food. The Guru promised to give him the uncooked stuff that he needed after he had dug up and found no life coming out of the earth’s womb. But the more he dug up, the more insects he saw coming out of the

earth. Nanak told him, "It is not through food that we are defiled, but through an evil mind."

Two Sikhs, Malo and Bhago, asked the Guru if any good attached to the practice of penances. The Guru replied : "To practise penances is to reject the goodness of God. If we put to deliberate pain the body which is the temple of God, how are we to please Him ? One should burn one's craving, not one's body. The mind can be steadied not by tearing it away under compulsion, from the activity of life, but by yoking it to God in whatever one does. Holy is he whose mind is holy, who does injury to no one, and serves everyone, minding not the coat he wears, and remaining humble and giving up desire even in the midst of the work-a-day world."

It is here, it is said, that the Guru composed one of his masterpieces, the *Bara Maha*, in which he expresses his utter devotion to the one God, like a wedded spouse pining for her lord and master who has gone abroad. The changing moods of nature from month to month are reflected here in superb poetry, making more and more intense the lover's sense of separateness and longing for union with the beloved.

A Sikh came to the Guru asking for help to marry off his daughter. The Guru sent one of his devotees, Bhagirath by name, to fetch him some gold ornaments from Lahore, but not to stay there overnight. The devotee carried out the instructions with such meticulous care that the jeweller also liked to accompany him to the Guru. Here, he was overwhelmed with the piety and wisdom of Nanak and became a devotee of his. It is said, from here he went to Ceylon, distributing all he had to the poor, in order to propagate the message of his new faith and even converted Raja Shivanabham (popularly known

as Shivanabh) of Ceylon¹ to Nanak's way.

And now, the Guru also decided to take a journey to the South. His companions were two Jats, Saido and Gheeo. Seeing the Guru rise very early in the morning, and bathing at the river, they thought the Guru worshipped the God of water, Khwaja Khizar. It is said, one day they had a vision of Khwaja Khizar who told them that while he was water, Nanak was the air in which water is contained. Their doubt thus dispelled, they yoked themselves to the service of Guru with more sensitive devotion.

On their way to the South, they came across a famous Jaina temple. Its custodian, Narbhi, came to visit the Guru and asked, "Do you take old corn or new? Do you shake trees to get fruit? If so, then you destroy life and are not worthy to be called a holy man." Nanak answered: "From water came the fourteen gems, on the river-banks all are the Hindu places of pilgrimage, water washes us clean, how can one despise the cool, flowing water, which gives life to us all? As for destroying life, is there anything that has no life, flowers and leaves have life, so has water life, so has corn, so have milk and curds. It is through wisdom that one is emancipated, not by shunning food that God has blessed us with, in any form."

1. He may not have been the king of Ceylon, but a chieftain of Jaffna, then one of the three independent states of Ceylon, and which was mostly peopled by Shaivite Tamils as against the prominent Buddhist population of Kotte and Kandy. May be the name of the king is erroneously mentioned for recently the researches of Ceylonese scholars and archaeological finds have established the visit of a holy person of the name of "Nanakacharya" to King Dharmaparakamababu (who came to the throne of Kotte in 1493) and who debated both with the Buddhists and the Brahmins of his realm.

As they passed through an island in the ocean, a devilish-looking man, used to eating human flesh, barred their way. The Guru was accompanied by another Jat also this time, Seeho by name. Seeing them, he wanted to spear them to death and then eat their flesh. Saïdo and Gheeho were much anguished at this, and started wailing. The Guru stood composed, and sang the following hymn :

“If God be merciful He’d cause the devotee to do as he’s bidden,

And worship Him in whatever comes to his lot.

O, such a one is then acceptable to my God.”

Seeing his serene and holy face in the face of utter danger, the tyrant was transformed. It is said, he became a great devotee of God thereafter.

On the way, he met a Muslim Pîr, Makhdum Bahaudin Qureshi, who was very proud of his spiritual attainments and renown. Many of his miracles he advertised to the Guru. Nanak said to him, “You are a spiritual person, and yet so proud of your station ? The way of God is the way of humility. He who becomes fond of his own praise, loses God.” The Pîr took this censure to heart, and asked Nanak to stay with him for some time more to instruct him back to God’s path. The Guru replied :

“Who can stay at a place, when nothing stays ?

I would stay only, if that where I am were to stay with me.

Yea, God alone stays : so I’d bide with Him,

For, the world stayeth not, nor the sky, nor day, nor night,
nor moon, nor sun, nor do the stars,

Nor Kings, nor pîrs, nor angels, nor ascetics, nor men, nor
books, nor rituals :

Yea, God alone stayeth, or His Word.”

Much humbled, the Pīr asked, "Whom am I to adopt as my Guru." Nanak replied: "He who is the Guru of us all : thy God."

From there, the Guru proceeded towards Ceylon. On being told that a great faqīr had come from India to visit his land, the King, whose name is given in the Sikh chronicles as Shivanabham, sent beautiful damsels to tempt him with their charm. But Nanak took no notice of them. Then the King himself came and asked : "What's thy name, thy caste ? Are you a yogī ?" Nanak replied, "A yogī is he whose interior is cleansed with the discipline of God's love, and who is ever imbued with His Truth and whose comings and goings are ended. O God, what is Thy Name, Thy caste ? When Thou call me into Thy Presence, I would ask Thee to answer the questionings of my mind."

Then, the King asked, "Are you a Brahmin ?" Nanak answered : "A Brahmin is he who bathes in the waters of God's Wisdom, and knows the One alone whose light permeates the three worlds."

The King asked, "Are you 'a Khatrī, a shopkeeper ?" The Guru replied : "My tongue is the beam, my heart the scale, and I weigh therewith the Essence of the Unknown. There is but one shop, and one Merchant, and the customers too are all of the same type "

The King asked if he was a Hindu or a Muslim. Nanak replied : "The True Guru has resolved the differences for him of the two ways who is yoked to the One alone : he cherishes His Word and dispels his Doubt."

The King was much impressed by these answers, and asked about the state of a being such as the one Nanak had described to him. Nanak answered in most subtle terms :

"The man of God lives in a state of superconscious, a Void it is, where there's neither joy nor sorrow, hope nor desire,

caste nor castemarks, no sermons, no hymning of hymns ; seated in himself, man meditates, composed like the sky, and knows himself.”

This composition, consisting of 40 stanzas and known as “Prana-sangli” is no longer extant. The Guru blessed the King and said, “Thy devotion will be approved of by God.” The King became a great devotee of Nanak, and did much good to his subjects, so much that the people said, “Our king has no love left for the joys of the world. He lives ever in Nanak and God ”

On his return to Panjab, the Guru went to a fair of the yogis in Achal-Batala to have discourse with them. He was wearing the dress of a householder. There was such a vast crowd wanting to see and pay homage to him that the Yogis grew jealous and their leader, Bhangarnatha, asked, “O boy, why have you made the ‘milk’ sour, and wear the robes of a householder, claiming to be an ascetic. No butter (of wisdom) is thus churned.” Nanak replied, “He whose ‘mother’¹ is unwise makes the ‘milk’ sour by washing not the ‘churn’². He who abandons family life and curses it, shouldn’t go out to beg at the door of the householders. He who does nothing here, will get nothing hereafter.”

The Yogis asked, “You are reputed to be a man of miracles. Wouldn’t you show one or two to us ” The Guru replied, “All miracles are a negation of God. I believe in no miracle but God and the companionship of the holy. Were I to put on the dress of fire, bide in a house of snow and eat iron, and eschew all my pain, and drive the earth before me, and weigh the whole firmament with a mere trifle, and perform the impossible, all that would be vain, if God blesses not me with

1. i. e. The Guru.

2 i e. Signifying the body.

His Grace and the joy of ever living in Him.”

It is said Nanak was offered a cup of home-made liquor in order to induce *samadhi* (the state of super-consciousness). The Guru refused the cup, saying, “He who has the knowledge of the Divine, and meditates upon it, and does only what is good, and loves God, keeps ever intoxicated ”

The Yogis asked, “Who, in thy opinion, is a hermit ?” Nanak replied, “He who with the ‘sword’ of Wisdom wrestles with the five passions¹ and knows how the ten organs of action and five of perception function, whose mind is ever filled with the Divine, and who makes pilgrimages, within, all the year round, and washes the pride of his heart, is, indeed, hermit.”

The Yogis then asked him to join their ranks without which no one could find Release. The Guru said, “Not through a patched coat, nor ear-rings nor wallet, nor staff, nor a deer’s horn can one become a true yogi. For me, he alone is a yogi who controls his five passions, sleeps little and eats but sparingly, and keeps devoted to God, restrained in desire, uttering wisdom, thus making his body and mind holy, and accepting as good whatever comes from God. the Good. Then, the Unstruck Melody of God’s Word will fill one’s being.”

From here, Nanak proceeded to Kashmir. It is said, he wore in this journey “leather on his feet and on his head, twisted a rope round his body, and on his forehead stamped a saffron-mark like a devout Hindu.” He was accompanied by Hassu, a blacksmith and Sihan, a calico-printer. In Srinagar, they met a Brahmin of repute, Brahm Das by name, who came with two donkeyloads of Sanskrit books to greet him. As a mark of piety, he wore a *Shaligram* (stone-idol) upon his neck. Seeing the Guru robed in an unusual dress,

3. Ego, lust, wrath, greed and undue attachment.

he asked, "What kind of a faqir are you ? You wear leather which is forbidden to the holy ? Why do you twist a rope round thy body ? What is thy way ?"

Nanak replied, "There's but one road that leads to the only Door. The True [Guru's Wisdom teaches everyone the Way."

Brahm Das then asked, "Know you how the world was created ? What was in the beginning and what was not ?" The Guru replied .

"In the beginning was utter darkness and chaos upon
chaos.

Then, there was neither earth, nor heaven,
nay nothing but God's indescribable
and wondrous Will.

Neither day there was, nor night, nor sun, nor moon, only
God reflecting on Himself in the Void.

There was neither wind nor water, nor the sources of
creation, nor speech there were

Neither creation, there was nor destruction, neither coming
nor going.

No seas. There were no rivers, no continents, no hells.

No paradise, no world, no underworld there was,

Nor Brahma. nor Shiva, nor Vishnu, but my only, God.

No rituals there were, nor penances, nor the sacred
books, no incantations, nor charms, nor the many,
many ways.

No caste then was, nor pride, nor death, nor life, nor
man, nor soul, no subject, no king.

And when and how He pleased, He created the world
and all we see and believe."

The Pandit was still so proud of his learning that inspite of his being impressed by the Guru's instructions, he would

yet feel hurt if the new teaching went against his own. Nanak feeling the inner state of his mind asked him to accept a Guru. "Who could be my Guru," he asked, "I know everything I ought to know." Nanak then directed him to a wilderness where in a house he would find four faqirs who would direct him to where his Guru was. The Pandit said, "May it be so," and went to the place he had been told. The faqirs pointed toward a temple where they said he would meet his Guru. When Brahm Das went there, he saw a beautiful, but nude damsel who instead of greeting him insulted him. When he narrated the story to the faqirs who had directed him to her, they said, "This woman is MAYA. Your heart is in her, and that is how you cannot find the peace of mind." This led to much heart-searching on the part of the learned Brahmin who came to Nanak to ask for instruction. The Guru said to him, "Learning is not Wisdom. Wisdom comes through experience; experience through spiritual discipline which, if disinterested and grounded in humility, invokes the Grace of God."

The Brahmin, purged of ego, dedicated his life to contemplation and disinterested service of the others.

The Guru, now scaling peak after peak, reached Mount Sumeru. There, he met some renowned Siddhas whose fame as miracle-men and ageless ascetics had travelled throughout the country. They asked him in what state he had left his country, how the people lived. The Guru replied :

"The Kali age is the knife, kings are butchers,
and justice has taken wings.
The darkness of falsehood is abroad,
And one knows not where rises
the moon of Truth.
The subjects are blind, and submissive, being
unwise, and live on falsehood.

The teachers dance to the tune of the disciples :
 The Qazis do justice if their palm is greased,
 And what bind men and women to each others is
 greed, not love."

Then, the Siddhas asked, "What if thy name, thy sect, thy object of contemplation ? Where do you come from, where do you dwell and whither are you bound ?"

Nanak answered : "I dwell in God who has his seat in every heart. I act as I'm bidden by the True Guru, I came in accordance with God's Will and will depart when He so ordains To reflect upon my only God is my prayer. He who knows himself acts this wise and is absorbed in the True One."

The Siddhas asked, "Know you not that the world is like an ocean and is impassable. He who escapes it not is drowned."

Nannk replied, "Like an lotus or as the water-fowl, I live in the water, so I'm drowned not. He who meditates on God's Word and lives, desireless, in the midst of desire, he remains unaffected by sorrow. For him, there is neither coming nor going."

The Siddhas acknowledged the truth in what he said. It is said that here the Guru composed his philosophical composition, called the *Siddha Goshti*, through which are expounded the basic doctrines of his faith.

On the way back, the Guru visited a place called Hassan Abdal, the seat of a Muslim divine, which was then occupied by a person known as Vali Kandhari, or the mystic from Kandhar. He was a person proud of his station and occult powers. Mardana felt very thirsty, but there was no water around except on top of the hillock where lived the great Vali. Mardana trekked upto him and asked for water which was refused to him because he was a kafir (an infidel), and yet

pretended that he was accompanied by a great Hindu Saint ! “If he hath no supernatural powers, why callest thou thy Guru a Saint. And if he hath any, then, he should get water wherever he needeth it.” Mardana, greatly distressed, reported the matter to the Guru, who, after a moment’s thought, asked his follower to dig up the earth. He had hardly pushed aside a huge boulder, assisted by his Master, that sparkling water gushed out. The Muslim divine was greatly irked at this, and threw a huge stone towards them. This the Guru halted with the palm of his right hand. In memory of this event, a stone carrying the impression of his hand still stands at Hassan Abdal, known popularly as Panja Sahib (or the Sacred Palm), at the head of a spring of lustrous water, about thirty miles from the present capital of Pakistan. It is held in great reverence by all communities, believed to be the hand-impression of Nanak himself and is a centre of pilgrimage to this day. A great fair is held here on the day of Baisakhi (13th April) to which people repair from long distances.

VI

"Wheresoever I see, I see no one but Thee "

—GURU NANAK

THE LAST Trip of Nanak was to Mecca, Medina and Mesopotamia. In this trip he was accompanied by Mardana. Nanak dressed himself in blue robes like a Muslim hajji. In one hand he carried an earthen goblet for ablutions, and in the armpit the 'holy book' and a prayer-mat. Whenever occasion arose, he performed his prayer in the orthodox Muslim way, and disclosed his identity to no one lest he be prevented from making this sacred journey which was permissible only to men of the Muslim faith.

When he arrived in Mecca, tired and footsore, it is said, he slept at night, with his feet towards the holy *Kabba*. This was considered to be an act of great sacrilege as no Muslim ever does so. An Arab priest, much incensed at this impertinence, kicked him saying, "You infidel, knowest thou not thou turnest thy feet towards the house of God?" The Guru replied with utter composure. "Turn my feet to whichever side there's no God." The Mulla dragged his feet in the opposite direction, but it is said, he saw the Vision of God in that opposite direction also.¹ This amazed the Muslim divine and saying, "Allah, Allah, this is a miracle-man; he maketh men

1. The Sikh chronicles say he saw the *Kaaba* moving to whichever direction Nanak's feet were turned by him. The story is repeated in every chronicle and if no record is present of his visit to Mecca in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, may be due to the fact that no non-Muslim was officially allowed this pilgrimage. But, when was such a ban imposed first is not clear. History bears witness to two other non-Muslims (including the Lawrence to Arabia) having visited the Mecca shrine in disguise.

see," he repeated the incident to several of his colleagues. "A great Teacher has come from somewhere exuding divinity and performing miracles," he said. They flocked to him in large numbers and one of them asked, "Pray tell us, which of the two is greater, Hindu or Musalman?" The Guru replied, "he who does good and lives in God."

They then asked him if he kept fast in the month of Ramzan. Nanak replied, "I keep fast everyday : I fast by turning away from the Other and fixing my gaze on the One alone. I treasure compassion and abandon craving : thus do I fast."

Then, they asked, "Do you read the holy book, the Quran?"

The Guru replied, "I do not read, I do what is bidden by God. He who reads, but stills not his mind, his anxiousness goes not. But, he who is in love, all that he does is worship. But how will they attain God whose gods quarrel with one another."

It appears that several Muslim saints who had come from India and had met Nanak before, among them Sheikh Ibrahim, Makhdum Bahaudin, etc., also came to know that Nanak was in their midst. So they told men of their faith about his unorthodox ways and mysterious approach to the problems of spiritual life. They also came to pay their homage to him and asked other people to learn from him and not to argue with him. Then, they all asked how God's pleasure was to be attained by men of the world? Nanak replied : "By submitting, in all humility, to whatever comes from God."

After some time, the Guru went to Medina and from there to Baghdad. There, he sat outside the city and shouted his own prayer which said, "There are millions of nether and upper regions, and no one has found their limit. Only my God knows how vast is His expanse." The Muslim priests were greatly enraged, for they had been told that there were

only seven upper regions and as many nether worlds. But Nanak argued that a mortal who wanted to find the limits of God's power would only weary at the end. To his memory, a shrine still stands intact in Baghdad, looked after by a devout Muslim.¹

The Guru then returned to his country, *via* Multan, which was much frequented by faqirs in those days. The faqir sent him a cup of milk, full to the brim, signifying that the place was already full of them and another like him could not be contained. The Guru placed a jasmine flower on top of the milk, suggesting that as that flower with its weightlessness floated on the surface and displaced not the milk, so would he live in their midst, with the burden only of fragrance !

1. The inscription on the wall of this shrine reads:

“In memory of the Guru, that is the Divine Master Baba Nanak Faqir Aulia, this building has been raised anew with the help of the Seven Saints.”
Year 927 Hijri (A.D. 1520-21)

VII

"The light mergeth in the light, and lo, man is fulfilled"

—GURU ARJUN

AND, NOW the Guru, far-famed and aging in years, though not in spirit, settled down at Kartarpur, on the right bank of the river Ravi. He discarded the pilgrim's dress and donned the robes of a householder. As has been stated before, his wife was already here, looking after a farm along with her married son, Lakhmī Das, the other, Sri Chand, having become a recluse. Hearing that the Guru had come back, men and women flocked to him from the four corners of India to pay him homage and receive instructions from him.

It is here that Mardana, his life-long musician companion, breathed his last. The Guru took his son, Shahzada, into his household and he played the rebeck like his father to the holy congregations, while Nanak sang his hymns, or otherwise discoursed on them. It is still a tradition that the Muslim *Rababis* (rebeck-players) perform *Harī Kīrtan* in the Sikh temples with as much zest, and are revered as much, as the Hindu and Sikh musicians.

It is here that Bhai Lehna, later known as Angad, became a devotee of the Guru and succeeded him to his spiritual Throne. Lehna was going, as usual, on a pilgrimage to the temple of Vaishno Devi, the goddess he worshipped. On the way, he was persuaded by one of the Sikhs to stop over for the night and meet Nanak, the Guru. This Lehna did, and was so impressed with the piety and searching wisdom of Nanak that he became his disciple and served him most faithfully till the end of his days.

One day, in order to put his followers to a test, the Guru assumed the garb of a 'wild' man. Donning a tattered gown, an open knife in hand, and taking some hunting dogs with him, he proceeded towards the forest. Seeing him robed thus, many of his followers fled in terror. Others who went a little further found it is said, some copper coins scattered on the road and picking them they, too, hastened back. Some who remained found a few silver pieces further ahead, and picking these they too returned home. Only two of his Sikhs and Lehna remained. The party now approached a burning pyre, beside which lay a dead body, covered with a white sheet and emitting foul smell. The Guru, his eyes wild, thundered : "Whosoever desires to remain with me, let him eat this corpse." The other Sikhs fled in horror, but Lehna remained and said, "I would obey my Master " And, as he proceeded towards it, the Guru stopped him, saying, "That's enough. I now know how many have the moral strength to follow my Path."

Lehna not only worked on the farm, but devoted his entire spare time to contemplation of God's Name. Nanak put him along with others to several tests, but whereas his sons always disobeyed him, and his other followers shirked work or did it half-heartedly, Lehna never wavered in his faith. Knowing his end to be near, the Guru anointed him as his successor, placing five paisas and a coconut in front of him and going round him four times. Bhai Buddha, his other devoted Sikh, applied the *tilak* (saffron-mark) to his forehead as a mark of approval. Such was Nanak's humility that he considered the ceremony incomplete without its being approval by his devout followers.

The Guru's wife protested ; she brought to him his two sons and said, "What is to become of me, of them?" Nanak

replied, "God is your refuge. I have done what God in His Will bade me do."

The Guru then sang the following hymn :

"Hail, my True king, hail, Thou who createst and yokest
each to his appointed task

And, then, when one's days are over and the cup is full,
Thou separatest the body from the soul.

Yea, when the hour strikes, the soul is led away and the
dear ones wail in sorrow.

Remember God, O my loved ones, for all must depart.

The world is but for a few brief days and then we part.

Like a guest we should bide here, and be not vain

For in the other world, only the deeds are reckoned, and

God accepts only those who have lived in His love.

O father, they alone mourn us truly, who mourn in love :
for our good, not goods.

O love, they alone weep for us, who weep for love."

Then, the Guru asked his followers to sing the composition called "Sohila" (or God's Praise), which he had enjoined upon them to sing before retiring to bed, and which says :

"Sing the Praises of my Lord seated in the house of
Poise

Yea, of my fearless God, whose Song brings the mind
home.

He whose gifts cannot be evaluated, O, how can one then
evaluate the Giver?

The year, the month, the hour of 'marriage' is fixed,

Pour oil on the threshold, my mates, and bless me that
I meet with my love.

In every home, today or tomorrow cometh from beyond
the call,

So assemble your God in the heart, for the Day must come for us all."

Nanak, then, went into *Samadhi* and was no more. Now, a quarrel ensued between Hindus and Muslims whether Nanak should be buried like a Muslim or cremated like a Hindu. Both claimed him with equal vehemence. The wise of the two communities decided that flowers be kept by both. overnight, on his body and flowers of whosoever withered first should give in to the other. But in the morning, the flower-offerings of the one party remained as fresh as those of the other. But when they lifted the cotton sheet from his body, it is said, they found not the body, only silence and flowers. They then decided that they would divide the cotton sheet into two equal halves, one burying it and the other consigning it to fire!

Thus ended the life-story of the unusual and mysterious man, who became a legend in his own life-time and for whom his life—nay all life—was one single experience of Truth, and who lived that he may suffer and see, and who saw a Beyond that is here, within us, within the reach of us all, and yet so distant and unreal to many. He gave meaning to life by integrating it with the total self, by taking out of it what was not-life, by dying while alive and yet the life living, whole and entire, which makes man both happy and free.

Thus Spake Nanak

*“Truth is above everything,
but higher still is the living of Truth.”*

Note : All translations are by the author and selected from his English version of the Guru Granth Sahib. For the exposition of the Sikh doctrine, the author's “The Religion of the Sikhs” may be consulted.

ON GOD

By the grace of the one Supreme Being. The Eternal. The all-pervading. The Creator. The (Cosmic) person. Without fear. Without hate. The Being beyond Time. Not incarnated. Self-existent. The Enlightener. (*Mul Mantra, M; M.I.*, or the basic formula in the beginning of the Sikh Scripture).

True in the beginning, True in the primeval age, True He is, and True He shall be. (*Jap. M.I.*)

God is neither appointed nor created. Yea, He's Self-existent, the Immaculate One. (*Jap. M I. 5*)

Though a better form of life be attained through good actions, salvation comes only through God's Grace and Benediction. (*Jap. M.I. 5*)

His Knowledge is unutterable. Even if I knew, I couldn't tell. (*Jap. M.I. 5*)

That alone is good which pleases my God. (*Jap. M.I. 16*)

O Primal Word, (the Creator of) Maya and the Primal Cause, hail to Thee, Thou that art Truth, eternal Bliss and Beauty. (*Jap. M.I. 21*)

God alone knows how great He be. (*Jap. M.I. 24*)

Everywhere is God's seat, Everywhere is His stall. And He puts in it what He wills once for all. (*Jap. M.I. 31*)

In the brackets are indicated first the name of the composition or the musical measure followed by the number of the verse and line, as given in the Sikh Scripture. 'M I' stands for the "first Master", that is, Guru Nanak.

He alone knoweth who See-eth Him. (*Asa. M.I. 4:2*)

God neither dies nor is there any to grieve for Him.
(*Asa. M.I. 4:3*)

God alone giveth and His giving knows no bounds.
(*Asa. M.I. 4:3*)

He whose gifts cannot be evaluated, O, how then can one
evaluate the Giver ? (*Gauri Deepaki. M.I. 4:1*)

The second, the minute, the hour, the solar and the lunar
day, the changing seasons—are all created by the same lone
sun. Thus doth permeate through the many the God, the One
alone. (*Asa. M.I.*)

Thousands are Thy eyes, yet hast Thou eyes ? Thousands
are Thy forms, yet hast Thou a form ? Thousands are Thy
lotus-feet, yet hast Thou feet ? Thousands Thy noses to smell,
yet hast Thou a nose, O wonder of wonders ? Thou art the
Spirit that pervadeth all. (*Dhanasri. M I. 4:3*)

When one meets with the True One, Truth is revealed to
one and one merges in Truth. (*Sri Rag. M I. 4.10*)

I renounced my formative will and the noise of reason,
when I met my Master, the carefree. (*Sri Rag. M.I. 1:11*)

How shall we become fearless if we do not fear the Lord
and merge in His Word ? (*Sri Rag. M.I. 2:11*)

He who gave us life and soul, gives us also peace when He
comes into us. (*Sri Rag. M.I. 2:11*)

It is by realising God in our inner-selves that He blesses
us with His Grace and washes off our dirt.

(*Sri Rag. M.I. 3:12*)

Accused is the Bride who loveth any one other than her
Lord. (*Sri Rag. M.I. 1:13*)

He who sees the same light pervade all, all over, and realises the essence of the Guru's Way, realises the God in himself. *(Sri Rag. M.I. 4:14)*

The self-willed are separated from God.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 4:18)

He, the Lord, of taste, is the enjoyer; He, indeed, is the pleasure that He enjoys, He's the bride : yea, He the spouse in bed with her. He it is who pervades all; yea, He the Master who sports. He's the fish, He the fisherman; He the net, He the river. *(Sri Rag. M.I.)*

Thou art the River of Wisdom. How can I, a mere fish, know Thy expanse ? *(Ibid)*

I see not the fisherman nor the net, but when cometh pain, I call on Thee. *(Sri Rag. M.I. 2:31)*

Thou art near and far and in the middle, seeing, hearing and creating all by Thyself. *(Sri Rag. M.I. 4:31)*

True He is and Truth it is that he loves.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 2:32)

He is thy Creator, thy Transcendent God.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 1:79)

He seeks no one's counsel when He builds, nor when He razes things to the dust. He giveth and taketh as He willeth. *(Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 4:1)*

God's Grace is upon all, but blesses He to Him whom He chooses. *(Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 4:1)*

We all are the brides of the Lord and bedeck ourselves for His pleasure, but if we are proud of our beauty, of no avail then are our bridal robes.

(Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 1:2)

Thou, O God, are Thy only attribute : Thou the one who utterest, hearest, and dwellest on it. Thou Thyself art the Jewel, Thou the evaluator, (though) beyond value art Thou. Thou art the honour and the glory and Thou the giver of them.

(*Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 1:3*)

God alone is pure, the others are trapped by illusion.

(*Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 4:3*)

O Thou that dost not seem, but art in every heart !

(*Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 2:3*)

He who fears not his God is afraid, for without Him all is darkness.

(*Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 3:3*)

They all say, "Thou art highest of the high," but who has seen Thee, O God ? It is the Guru who makes me see, and then I see Thee wherever I see.

(*Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 8:3*)

In Thy Will, O God, are we all created. In Thy Will do we do all deeds. In Thy Will are we subject to death, in Thy Will do we merge in Truth.

(*Sri Rag, M.I. Ashtapadis, 8:4*)

He is Allah, the Unknowable, Unfathomable, the Creator and the Cause, our only Beneficent God.

(*Sri Rag. M. I. Ashtapadis, 6 : 17*)

He the Giver gives ; it is the taker who says, "Enough no more "

(*Jap. M. 1. 3*)

The gifts are all God's : with Him one is all-to-helpless. Some receive them not while awake, others He blesses by awakening them from their sleep.

(*Sri Rag. Var. Shloka M. I.*)

The Lord createth nature and then pervadeth it.

(*Sri Rag. Var. Shloka M. I.*)

This world is led astray by Doubt, but who has strayed it thus away, if not Thou ? *(Sri Rag M. I.)*

The lord minded not my merit, demerit, and as is his innate nature, He embraced me to His Bosom and now even the hot wind touches me not. *(Sri Rag. M. I.)*

Thou art a Yogi amongst yogis, a reveller amongst revelers. O dear, Thy limits are known to no one in heaven, the world or the underworld. *(Sri Rag. M. I.)*

The world is blind and the God alone See-eth.

(Asa. M. I. 2 : 4)

When Thou, O Creator, art the course of all causes, why then shall I lean on the world and for what ?

(Asa. M. I. 2 : 4)

As much is the music in our mind that much is Thy sound O Lord As much is the form, that much is Thy body. Thou art the tongue that tastes, Thou the nose that smells.

(Asa. M. I. 1 : 5)

Great is Thy glory, for great is Thy Name. Great is Thy Glory, for Thy Justice is true. Great is Thy glory, for eternal is Thy Seat. Great is Thy glory, for Thou knowest our speech. Great is Thy glory, for Thou divinest our inner thoughts. Great is Thy glory for Thou givest, unasked. Great is Thy glory, for Thou art all-in-all. Nanak : all Thy doings one cannot tell. For what is and will be, is all in Thy will.

(Asa M. I. Var.)

True are Thy worlds, True Thy universes. True are Thy regions, True the forms Thou createst. True are Thy doings, True all Thy thoughts. True is Thy command, True is Thy Court. True is Thy Will, True is Thy utterance. True is Thy Grace, True Thy sign. Myriads call Thee Light and Truth. In Thee, the True One, is all power, all majesty. True is Thy

Praise, True Thy commendations. O True King, True, True
is all Thy play. (*Asa. M.I. Var. Shloka M. I.*)

Nanak : the Lord acteth according to His Law, and lo, He
worketh with discrimination too. (*Asa. M. I. Var.*)

In the Lord's fear blows the wind with its myriad breezes. In
the Lord's fear roll a myriad river down. In His fear is the fire
forced to labour hard. In His fear is the earth crushed under a
burthen. In His fear do the clouds roam on their heads. In his
fear doth the *Dharma-raja*¹ stand at the Lord's gate. In His fear
blazes the sun, in His fear shines the moon, and move aeons of
both, and miles without count. In His fear are the *Siddhas*²,
*Buddhas*³, *Nathas*⁴. In His fear does the sky vault over the
earth. In His fear bide the warriors and heroes of strong
limb. In His fear do boat-loads of men come and go. Yea,
the writ of thy Lord's fear is over the heads of all. Says
Nanak : "Fearless is the One Absolute, the True Lord, alone."
(*Asa. M. I. Var. Shloka M. I.*)

True, O Lord, art Thou alone who hast manifested Thyself
in all as Truth. (*Asa. M. I. Var.*)

Thou, O God, art the Creator, who am I to create ? For, if
I create, I can create not. (*Ibid, Shloka, M. I.*)

In Thy creatures, is Thy Light, O God, Through Thy
light art Thou known and, though without attributes, all
attributes inhere in Thee. (*Ibid*)

1. The Lord-justiciar within, the discriminating spirit. According
to the old Hindu belief, the Angel of death before whom spirits have to
render account.

2. Men with supernatural powers

3. The enlightened ones.

4. The master-yogis.

He whose sustenance sustains us, to Him, let's say, 'all hail.' Says Nanak: "With the Master, the command wouldn't do; it is the prayer that works." (Ibid)

What use is that service which rids not one of the fear of the Lord? Nanak: the true servant is he who merges in the Master. (Ibid)

I do the work which He, my God, has assigned to me. (Ibid)

In the seedless (superconscious) state abideth the Yogi, our God, who can be identified neither as man nor woman. (Dhanasri. M.I. Astapadis : 1)

If the seeker cries out and begs at the Lord's Door, the Lord hears him and, whether He blesses him or curses him; he must revel in His glory. (Asa. M. I. 1 : 3)

He who knows the mystery of his only God, he forsooth is himself the Creator and the God of gods (Ramkali M. I.)

This, verily, is the highest virtue of God that He alone is; neither there was nor will there ever be any other. (Asa. M. I.)

O my Loved one, I know not Thy end ; Thou pervadest the earth, the waters and the interspace ; yea Thou fillest all. (Suhi. M. I.)

He is whose mind abides God, loses his self. (Maru. M. I.)

Blessed is the township of the body in which abide the five great ones—Truth, Compassion, Contentment, discrimination, righteousness—and over them rules the One Detached, wrapped in absolute trance. (Maru. M. I.)

One knows not the Unknowable, but how is He to be known ? It is through the Guru who reveals unto thee thy God abiding ever within thee. *(Basant. M.I.)*

O God, on Thy great, infinite tree are we perched like birds. *(Gujri. M.I.)*

He, our God, has neither mother, nor father, nor son, nor kindreds, nor passion, nor wife, yea, He, the Casteless One without a pedigree, Immaculate, Highest of the high, is the Light which pervades all. *(Sorath. M.I.)*

The spring brought bloom first, but God, was in bloom earlier still. Yea, He through whom everyone blooms, needs no one else for Him to flower.

(Var. of Rag Suhi. M.I. Shloka M.I.)

The One Supreme Being is the One Detached, and immortal, not born from the womb, casteless and uninvolved. He neither has form, nor sign : He's Unfathomable, Unperceivable.

(Bilawal. M.I. Thitti)

The True One Himself established the universe with His Hands. Yea, breaking its egg into two, He separated and yet united them He. And the earth and the sky He turned into His Dwellings. And created He also the night and day, fear and love. He who created them also see-eth them. Yea, there is no other Creator but our only God.

(Bilawal. M.I. Thitti)

There is no other source that creates : (for) everything is contained in God Whatever is, is from God. He, thy True Lord, has ever been through the ages. Yea, there is no one else, but thy God to create and destroy.

(Ramkali. M.I. 6)

There's no other source that creates, (for) everything is contained in God. Yea, whatever is, is from God.

(Ramkali. M.I. 6)

The whole world the God created spontaneously and permeated the three worlds with His Light.

(Ramkali. M.I. Dakhni Onkar, 2)

The One God is in all ways, all forms, all colours; yea, He's the One, who worketh through wind, water and fire, the one Soul permeateth all the three worlds.

(Ramkali. M.I. Dakhni Onkar, 7)

Himself is He, beyond comprehension of sense-faculties.

(Ramkali. M.I. Dakhni Onkar, 15)

From the Absolute, He, of Himself became Manifest, the Pure One; from being Attributeless, He endowed Himself with Attributes.

(Ramkali. M.I. Dakhni Onkar, 24)

Within us is God, without us is God too, yea, God is in the three worlds.

(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti)

The 'crow' turneth into a 'swan' if the Lord so willeth.

(M.I.)

I am in search of my Friend, but, lo, the Friend is ever with me. Unknowable is He, O Nanak, but one see-eth Him through the Guru.

(M.I.)

Within the township of the body is the fortress of the mind. And within the sky (of the mind), the Tenth Door, liveth the True One.

(Maru. M.I. Dakhni)

The fire that is quenched by water, that fire God putteth in the seas.

(Ibid)

Thou art the Riches of the poor, O God, the Guru of the Guru-less, Honour of the dishonoured, Power of the powerless, and Light of the blind, O Jewel, O Guru.

(Maru. M.I.)

THE WORLD

For aeons of years, there was chaos upon chaos and the infinite Boundless Lord was seated in Himself, alone and detached, in the heart of chaos; and the world of sacrifice was not yet born. In this way passed the thirty-six Yugas, yea, aeons of years, and as was His Will so He, the Absolute Lord, worked; and there was no rival of His, He Himself being infinite and boundless. And then when He created the four Yugas, He remained hid within all. And He prevailed the hearts of all, yea, He alone was through all the Ages.

(Maru. M.I. 7)

Our Detached God of Himself created Himself, and created also He, the Compassionate One. His True Abode; yea, He binds the air, water and fire together, and out of them creates the fortress of the body. To it, the Creator Lord has fixed the nine Doors,¹ and at the Tenth² liveth He, the Unfathomable and Infinite Lord.

(Maru. M.I. 16)

The Transcendent Lord was seated in His seedless Trance yea, He the Infinite One, Detached; and then he Himself created nature, and lo, the inanimate nature sprang out of chaos that was. Yea, out of His Absolute Self came air and water and the whole universe, and the fortress of the body and within it the kingly (mind), and into the fire and water of the body He breathed His own Light, yea, in His Absolute Self lay (unmanifest) all the power of creation. Out of His Absolute Self came Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva; yea, His Absolute Self manifested itself in all the Universes.

(Maru. M.I.)

Out of His Absolute Self were created the seven

1. Sense-organs.

2. Mind in the state of superconsciousness.

underworlds, and all the world rested only on his Absolute Self. Yea, the infinite Lord Himself caused it all, and everyone went about as was His Will. And the three modes¹ also were evolved out of His Self, and birth and death and the pain of ego
(*Maru. M.I. 17*)

Out of His Absolute Self came the five elements.

(*Maru. M.I. 17*)

In all life pervades He in a mysterious way, but He Himself, our King, keeps Detached The world is the reflection of Him who has neither father, nor mother. Nor has He a sister or brother, nor is He born nor dies nor belongs He to any class or clan, O, that Ageless God is pleasing to my mind.

(*Maru. M.I. 18*)

The world moves and has its being within the three modes, while Thou abidest in the Fourth State Thou hast over-powered and art above birth and death, and Thou art the life of all life, pure Light, and one Realiseth Thee through the Unstruck Melody (of the Word) by the Guru's Grace.

(*Maru. M.I.*)

True is the Lord's Court, unaccountable is He, the Cosmic Person, and True is His standard and His writ runs over all.

(*Maru M.I.*)

God abides in the soul, the soul in God; this is what one learns from the Guru's Wisdom. (*Bhairo. Asthapadis. M.I.*)

He alone liveth, in whom liveth God. (*Majh. M.I. Var.*)

THE LORD'S NAME

O God, I am a sacrifice to all the names Thou hast.

(*Basant. M.I.*)

1. Inertia or darkness, passion, illumination.

All that God has created, all that is His Name.

(Japu. M.I.)

Pure is the body wherein abides the True Name of God.

(Sri Rag. M I. 2:15)

Without the Lord's Name, thy, woes burn thee down.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 3:17)

God Himself Created Himself, Himself He Assumed the name.

(Asa. M.I. Var.)

That which is uttered with the heart and without the tongue : O rare is the one who knoweth what kind is that Name ?

(Malhar. M.I.)

The Lord's Name is an ecstasy that keeps me intoxicated night and day.

(M.I.)

Unseen, beyond comprehension of the senses, is the Lord's utterly sweet and loved Name.

(Maru. M.I.)

I have assembled in my heart the 'capital' of the Lord's Name. O God, whomsoever Thou blessest it with, he is emancipated. This treasure is neither burnt nor stolen, nor drowned, nor it perisheth.

(Maru. M.I.)

I know of no other contemplation nor wisdom, nor wear any garbs, nor force my will, for the Lord's Name that abides within me, yea, the eternal Truth, I've seized upon.

(Bilawal. M.I.)

The Lord's Name is Truth.

(Maru. M.I.)

When the mind is pierced through with the Lord's Name one abandons all thought of the Other.

(Sri Rag. M.I.)

In the contemplation of the Lord's Name is contained the essence of all penances and meditations.

(Dhanasri. M.I. 4)

In the Kali-age; the most sublime thing is the Lord's Name. *(Dhanasri. M.I. 8)*

The immaculate Name washes off the dirt of ego. *(Dhanasri. M.I. 2)*

Says Nanak, "Sweet is the great essence of the Lord's Name : through the Name, one's craving is stilled." *(Dhanasri. M.I.2)*

Let Truth, contentment and continence be thy companions, Thus, says Nanak, one cherishes the Lord's, Name by the Guru's Grace *(Ramkali. M I. Siddha Goshti)*

All that is, has become manifest through the Lord's Name, through the Name is all Wisdom. *(Ibid)*

It is through the True Guru that one attain unto the Lord's Name : through the Name one finds the Way. *(Ibid)*

Hark, ho, the one Name of God is eternally efficacious; this is the wise instructions of the Guru. *(Ramkali. M.I. Dakham Onkar, 11)*

This mercurial mind is held and abides in Truth, its real home, when the Lord's Name is one's support. *(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti)*

Imbued with the Lord's Name, one is rid of ego, and abides in Truth. Imbued with the name one knows the way of (true) Yoga. Imbued with the name, one is emancipated, and knows the Mystery of the three worlds and is ever in Bliss. *(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti, 32)*

The Lord's name is the Essence of all deeds, for, without the name, one is afflicted by Pain and Death. *(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti, 50)*

The Yogi, who knows the Way of the Immaculate Name, even a particle of soil sticks not to him. (*Maru. M.I.*)

My tongue is the beam; the heart the scales; and I weigh therewith the unweighable Name. (*Maru. M.I. 11*)

The Lord's Name has the merit of a pilgrimage to all holy places, through it, one is rid of all one's sins. The blind, unwise one churns water and seeks to find the Quintessence; but if one churns the Curds of Virtue led by the Guru's Word, one attains the Elixir of the Lord's Name.

(*Rag Maru. Ashtapadis, M.I.*)

True is one's society, true the abode, true the home, true is one's food and true is one's love, if one leans on the True Name.

(*Rag Maru. Ashtapadis, M.I.*)

THE GURU

They who were received in the sanctuary of the Guru, they were the ones so destined from eternity.¹ (*Asa M.I. 4:4*)

When one receives the Guru's instructions, one begins to fear God. (*Sri Rag. M I 4 10*)

They who deal in Truth, with them the Guru is pleased. (*Sri Rag. M.I. 4:11*)

When we meet with the True Guru; we are blest with the jewel of Discrimination, and we surrender our minds to the Guru and attains the all-loving God. We receive the gift of salvation and our sins are washed away.

(*Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis 1:10*)

I am a sacrifice to my Guru a myriad times a day, who made angels of men, and yea, without delay.

(*Asa. M I. Var Shloka. M.I.*)

1. But the Guru explains elsewhere that everyone is so destined if he were to know and awaken his within through the Guru's word.

Such is the glory of the True Guru that, in the midst of the household, one is emancipated. (*Dhanasri M. I. : 4*)

The Guru is the sea full of pearls : the saints (like swans) pick the pearls and remain attached to him.
(*Dhanasri. M. I. Ashtapadis : 1*)

The Guru given Wisdom is the only eternal pilgrim-station where one washes off all one's sins.
(*Dhanasri. M. I. Chhant : 1*)

It is through the Guru's door that one is blest with the inner eye. If one washes one's vessel with the Guru's Wisdom, it sparkles clean. (*Suhi. M. I. 6*)

If one meets with the Perfect Guru, one's doubt is shattered and cease the outgoings of one's mind. And then oozes (Nectar) out of the (mind's) spring, and one is attuned to the Music of Bliss and one Sees one's Lord is one's very Home.
(*Suhi. M. I. 8*)

Through the Wisdom of the Guru, my mind is attuned to the Lord in a state of equipoise. (*Bilawal. M. I*)

When one dwells upon the True Guru, one is rid of the sense of the Other ; and one is purged of all errors ; and the sinful mind is cleansed ; and one's body sparkles like gold and one's soul merges in the Oversoul. (*Bilawal. M. I. 3*)

The Guru's Word is the Nada¹, the Guru's Word is the Veda, for, through it, one is imbued with Lord of the universe In it is contained the merit of all austerities, fasting and

1. Unstruck Melody that the Yogi hears in the state of super-consciousness.

pilgrimages. Through it, doth one meet with the Guru and one is Emancipated by God's Grace.

(Ramkali. M. I. 10)

The mind, when it accepts the lead of the Guru, then, obliterating the sense of the other, it merges in God.

(Ramkali. M. I. 3)

The Guru wears the loin-cloth of Truth, and is for ever absorbed in the all-filling God, his tongue imbued with his love. The God, who created the creation, meets with the True Guru, (for) our God is pleased with his deeds, The Guru reveals to us the One God in all, and all contained in the One God.

(Ramkali. Dakhni M. I. 5)

The Guru's ocean is brimful with jewels, and inexhaustible therein is the pearly treasure of Truth.

(Ramkali M. I. Dakhni Onkar, 27)

Beauteous is the Guru's Word reflecting on which one attains to one's God. And one loses one's self and stilled is one's desire and the Bride attains to her Spouse.

(Ramkali. M. I. Dakhni Onkar, 47)

Meeting with the True Guru, one's Darkness is dispelled. And then, one's ego is stilled and into God one merges.

(Ramkali. M. I. Siddha Goshti, 15)

When one Reflects on the Guru's Word, one is rid of one's ignorance. And when one meets with the Guru, one attains the Door of Salvation.

(Ramkali. M. I. Siddha Goshti, 56)

The rusted iron too is transmuted into gold, if it meets with (the philosopher's stone of) the Guru.

(Maru. M.I. 3)

The True Guru is the Boatman and the Word (the oras), to ferry one to the other shore, where there's neither wind, nor fire, nor water nor form, and where abides our True Lord dispensing the True Name which takes us across. They who were led by the Guru, reached the other shore, attuned to the True One. And they overcame their 'coming and going'. their soul merged in the Oversoul; yea, through the Guru's Wisdom poise wells up in one, and one merges in Truth.

(Maru. M.I. 2)

The Guru is the pool of Nectar, we are the swans on its bank; yea, the sea of rubies and corals, and pearls and diamonds of the Lord's Praise with which my body and mind are imbued.

(Maru. M.I. 8)

They who are under the sway of the Guru, their deeds are true; and they come not, nor go, nor are they subject to the laws of death. They cling not to the branches but the roots, and within them is the zeal for Truth.

(Maru. M I. 12)

I'd believe only in him as the Guru who makes me cherish the Truth, and utter the unutterable, and merges me in the word.

(Dhanasri. M I.)

The God is merged in the Guru who disseminates His Word.

(Malhar. M.I.)

The True Guru has made me see the world, the underworld and the sky through His Grace. Yea, that Lord of the Universe who is, and will ever be, and it cast not into the womb, Him I See within my heart.

(Sorath. M.I.)

It is only when the True Guru is merciful that one See-eth Him, and, wandering through a myriad births, one Heareth His Word. *(Asa.M.I.)*

Without the Guru, devotion nor love for God wells up within us, nor are we ushered into the society of the saints. Without the Guru, one is blind, and is involved in strife. Through the Guru is the mind purged, through the (Guru's) Word is one's mind cleansed. It is by meeting with the Guru that one conquers one's self and one ever reveals in the Yoga of God's Devotion. Associating with the Guru-saint, one is rid of all one's maladies. Says Nanak : "In this way (through the (Guru) is one Blest with the yoga of Equipoise." *(Basant. M.I.)*

Meeting with the Guru, one's intellect becomes sublime. And the mind becomes immaculate, and one is rid of one's ego. *(Basant. M.I.)*

The True Guru is one who unites one with all. *(Sri Rag. M.I.)*

GOOD AND EVIL

Good are they who are judged good at the Lord's Door. *(Sri Rag. M.I. 4:4)*

Friend, that food, that pleasure is vain which fills the mind with evil and makes the body writhe in pain, *(Sri Rag. M.I. 2:7)*

When I found God's trust, the evil in me turned into good. *(Sri Rag. M.I.11)*

The true and wise farmer knows that one sows the seed only after one has tilled the land and furrowed it. *(Sri Rag. M.I. 2:13)*

The self-willed are never at peace while those turned
God-wards are steeped in his Wonder.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 3:19)

If the soul of man merges in the Oversoul, and his mind is
attuned to the higher Mind of the Guru's, then the desire for
violence, ego and the wander-lust of the mind depart, so do
our doubts and woes.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 2:20)

If good deeds be thy farm and thy seed be of the Word
and the way of Truth thy water, the growth will then be of
faith. Thus wilt thou gather the knowledge of heaven and
hell.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 1:27)

The mud of sin sticks to you, but you are like a frog
who knows not that he lives with the lotus (of God). The
black-bee teaches you the lesson (of love), but you hear it
not.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 2:27)

The more clever I am, the more load I carry.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 3:29)

Where the deeds are good, there is a perfect mind too.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 3:30)

He whose plants are we, He whose garden is the world, He
names the trees according to their fruit. *(Sri Rag. M.I. 2:32)*

So does a man flow as his mind be, and so does he gather
the fruit as is his destiny. What he soweth, he also reapeth.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 2:32)

O woman, where is happiness without merit ?

Through His Grace does the Lord give : as are our deeds, so blesses us He.

(Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 3:11)

All whom Thou likest, O God, are good. Of oneself one is neither good nor bad.

(Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 3:11)

Faith and contentment are the food of the angelic beings.

(Sri Rag. Var Shloka M.I)

The desires of the heart clamour like the cymbals and the ankle-bells and with them thumps the drum of the world. The mind dances to the tune of the Kali age. O, where can men of continence plant their feet ?

(Asa. M.I. 1:4)

See thou of each the Light within and ask not his caste, for Hereafter the caste is of no avail. *(Asa M.I. 2:3)*

If one seeks one's good, doing good one should feel humble. *(Asa. M.I. Var Pauri, 5)*

The virtuous practise righteousness but lose its the merit if they ask for deliverance (as reward). *(Ibid)*

Through smallness of our minds, we lose even the merit of service. *(Asa. M.I. Var)*

Call no one bad : this is the essence of knowledge. And argue not with a fool. *(Ibid)*

Nanak : with a sharp tongue, one's body and mind become inspid. The sour-tongued is discarded in the True Court and they all spit in his face. *(Ibid)*

What kind is the love that clings to the Other ? He alone who merges in His love is the true lover. He who's good only when to him good is done and in adversity becomer adverse, call him not a lover, for he trades in love. *(Ibid)*

He who both greets and is impudent to the Master is pulled from the roots. For, both his aspects are false and are of no account to his Lord. *(Ibid)*

Friendship with the unwise, and love of the egotists, are like a line drawn across water of which there is neither sign nor mark left. *(Ibid)*

Evil are the ear that hear slander, evil the hands that grab what is another's, evil the eyes that feed on the beauty of another's woman, evil the tongue that tastes other than God. Evil is the mind that craves for the Other, evil the body that does no good to another. O, evil is the smell that issues from evil. *(Ibid)*

Cursed is the life which one leads only to swell one's belly. *(Rag. Suhi Var. Shloka M.I.)*

The false one neither has honour, nor name, like the black crow who is ever unclean or like a bird imprisoned in a cage, who though he struts about behind the bars, is released not. *(Bilawal M.I. Thithi)*

He who has desire and a sense of mineness, and the love of woman in the mind, is neither a man of this world, nor of the other. *(Ramkali. M.I. 2)*

Lust and wrath are the two crops : seasons, night and day. We water the (body's) farm with greed, and sow in it the seeds of illusion, and our desire tills the land. The

plough is of evil intent, and the harvest is of sin; this is what one earns through the Lord's Will. And when of him the Account is asked, the womb (of his deeds) is declared sterile.

(*Shloka M.I. Var of Ramkali M. 3*)

Let Love be the farm, Purity the water, and Truth and Contentment the two bullocks; and Humility the plough and Consciousness the tiller, and God's Remembrance the right soil, and the Season Union (with God), and the seed be of the Name, and the crop of Grace; then (before it) the whole world seems an illusion. Nanak : if such be one's deeds, by the Lord's Grace, then one is separated not from God.

(*Shloka M.I. Var of Ramkali, M. 3*)

If thou challengest the Lord's Will, thy love breaketh. If thou pullest the arm both ways, it breaketh. Thy love breaketh also if thy speech is sour, for, thy God forsaketh and Bride of evil intent.

(*Ramkali. M. I. Dakhani Onkar, 28*)

Our deeds are the book which the mind writes in the ink (of desire) and the writing is of two kinds, good and bad, and then as drives us the writ of habit, so are we driven. But God has infinite virtues (through which one stills one's mind.

(*Maru. M.I.*)

Avarice (within me) barks like a dog, falsehood Pollutes me like a sweeper, cheating is like the eating of a carcass. Slander is the dirt that my tongue tasteth and anger is the fire that burns me like a *Chandala*¹.

(*Sri Rag. M. I. 4 : 4*)

Their avarice goes and their attachment, and also their

1. i.e. it is not the low castes whose touch pollutes one but evils like avarice, falsehood, cheating, slander, anger, etc.

enmity and ego and strife and anger and love of Maya the great Illusion, on whomsoever is the Grace of God.

(*Sri Rag. M. I. 3 : 14*)

He who stains his countenance with sin gets not refuge in the Lord's Court.

(*Dhanasri. M. I. 5*)

As iron is melted in the furnace, and then recast, so is the evil-doer cast into the womb again and over again.

(*Suhi. M.I. 4*)

PAIN AND PLEASURE

Pain is the cure, pleasure the malady, for, where there is pleasure, there, Thou, O God, art not.

(*Asa. M. I. Var. Shloka M I.*)

The Wise one is he who abides in the Will of God and looks upon pain and pleasure alike.

(*Idid 5*)

If the seeker cries out and begs at the Lord's Door, the Lord hears him and whether He blesses him or curses him, he must revel in His Glory.

(*Asa. M. I. 1 : 3*)

Out of the clear, blue waters sprouts the lotus and also the film of ignorance. The lotus lives with both, and yet keeps detached from both. But the frog knows not and eats only the dirt. It abides ever in water, but knows not love, like the black-bee who only hearing of the glory of the lotus is imbued with its lore, or like the Kamina flower which lowers its head in prayer when it sees the moon from afar, being intuitively awake. In the nectar-sweet milk are treasured also honey and sugar, but the tick tastes them not, and feeds itself, only on blood !

(*Maru. M.I.*)

We enjoy myriad kinds of joy to please the mind, but our riches are appropriated by others, while the body returns to the dust. All our possessions too are reduced to the dust in the end, and without the Word, the soil (of the mind) is cleansed not.
(*Bilawal. M. I.*)

He, who looks upon pain and pleasure like, by the Guru's Grace, he tastes not death.

(*Ramkali. M. I. Siddha Gosthi, 61*)

There is the pain of separation and of hunger and of disease and the power of death. O physician, which of these maladies would you cure ? One indulges in pleasures, forgetful of God and one suffers. But in the immaculate body lives the immaculate swan-soul in which abides the immaculate Name, yea, the essence of God's Attributes. It is through the True Name that one sheds all one's maladies and is emancipated.

(*Malhar M. I.*)

Nanak : the whole world is in pain.

(*Ramkali Ram. M. I. Var.*)

He alone is in pain who indulges in pleasures, forgetful of God.

(*Malhar. M. I.*)

THE PRACTICE OF THE WAY

Truth alone saves us, yea, Truth alone.

(*Asa. M. I. 4 : 2*)

If we surrender our body like a woman to our Master, He enjoyeth it.

(*Sri. Rag. M. I. 3 : 20*)

The body is the farm, thy actions the seed, it is watered by the Name of God in whose hands is the whole earth. The mind is the farmer and when the tree sprouts in thy soul, one attains to the state of *Nirvana*. (*Sri. Rag. M. I. 1 : 26*)

(Maya), the great deceiver, deceives him not, nor doth the dagger (of ego) hurt him, who liveth as God willeth. (*Sri. Rag. M. I. 1 : 33*)

Put thou the oil of wisdom (in the mind's lamp) gathered the sacred books. Let thy wick be of the Lord's fear, then fire it with the torch of Truth. Thus will thy lamp be lighted and thy Lord wilt thou meet. (*Sri Rag. M. I. 2 : 33*)

Dedicate thyself to service in the world and thou gettest a seat of Honour in the Lord's Court. (*Sri. Rag. M. I.*)

The Guru's Word is the Bride's decoration, and, so decked, she surrenders herself to her Lord. And, with joined palms, she stands in wait for Him with prayer in her heart. Such is the bride of true colour, imbued with His love, decked in the red bridal robes and living in fear of the Lord. (*Sri Rag. Ashtapadis. 2 : 2*)

The (true) Bride is she who sleeps, carefree, in her Lord's embrace. (*Sri Rag. M. I Ashtapadis. 8 : 2*)

All have merit save myself and beauty too, but I love my only God and I am met with by Him through the Guru's Word and then He forsakes me not. (*Sri Rag. M. I. Ashtapadis 2 : 6*)

Without the Capital, the Trader looks about in the four

continents in vain; for he knows not the reality that his Capital lies buried within himself.

((*Sri Rag. M. I. Ashtapadis 2 : 6*)

He, our God, testeth us on the touch-stone with love and attention.

(*Sri. Rag. M. I. Ashtapadis. 4 : 7*)

The collyrium of knowledge dispelleth all thy fear and thou see-est the Pure One in His love.

(*Sri. Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 3 : 7*)

I sought and sought and found my God. In His fear, I was united with him.

(*Sri. Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis. 8 : 7*)

I ask my Guru, "Pray tell me how shall I go thy way ?" Says he, "Keep the Lord's praise in thy mind and burn the agony of ego, and thou shalt meet thy Lord in the region of Bliss, for the True One is met through Truth."

(*Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 4 : 8*)

Without loving-adoration of God, one's body is cleansed not.

(*Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis 8 : 9*)

Blessed is the devotee who's above ritual, above the domain of the mind and is awake to the knowledge that the lord knoweth all.

(*Sri Rag. M.I.*)

Truth and contentment let these be thy two cymbals and to see Him ever, let this be thy subtle music. Let the Lord's fear within thy mind be thy turning-around in dance. To roll in dust is know the body as dust.

(*Asa. M.I. 6*)

To slay the self : this, indeed, is the essence of the six Sastras, and to realise the Light of the All-pervading, perfect God in all.

(*Asa. M. I. 2 : 11*)

The Godwards remain loving, pure and immaculate as the lotus, which, its roots in mud, waveth detached above the water's brim. *(Asa. M.I. 2 : 15)*

When Thou art our body and soul, to ask Thee for sustenance is to waste one's breath. *(Asa. M.I. Var. Pauri 5)*

We know the Truth, when in our heart abides the True God, and we cleanse our body of falsehood and make it pure *(Asa. M I. Var.)*

We know the Truth, when we love the Truth. *(Ibid)*

We know the Truth, when our soul knows the Way, and, cultivating the farm of our body we sow in it the seed of God *(Ibid)*

We know the Truth if we receive the True instruction and are compassionate to life and give away our bit in wholesome charity. *(Ibid)*

We know the Truth if we abide at the pilgrim-station of the Self, and as in the Guru's Will, so abide we. *(Ibid)*

They who sow the whole seed reap Honour, but how shall the broken seed sprout ? First, the seed should be whole, then the season propitious (only then does the seed sprout). *(Ibid)*

In God's fear, if the (body's) raw cloth be boiled and then it be mercerised with humility, and imbued with devotion, it takes on the Colour of God. *(Asa. M.I. Var.)*

Apply the collyrium of (God's) fear to thy eyes, and deck thyself with love. Yea, then alone art thou the true Bride when thou lovest thy Lord. *(Tilang M.I. 4)*

Go and ask thou the true Brides, how did they attain unto their Lord ? (Yea, in this way) that whatever He does they submit to His Will, and neither argue with him, nor force their will. Through whose love, one finds the (life's) object, why stick not fast to His Feet? And do as He commands, and surrender our body and mind to Him, and thus make ourselves fragrant. Says the true Bride : 'O sister, true is the Lord attained.'

(Tilang M.I. 4)

Let thy mind be the holding-ends of the cord and the churning-stick be of being ever-awake. And let the churning be the uttering of the Lord's Name with the tongue ; thus wilt thou gather the butter, yea, the Nectar of the Lord. Let thy mind be the abode (of God) washed in the waters of Truth, and make leaf-offerings of devotion, and dedicate to Him even thy life ; thus wilt thou enjoy union with thy Lord. *(Suhi M.I. 1)*

Build the boat of contemplation and self-control that you cross (the Sea of material existence) unobstructed, as if there was no sea to cross, nor tides to contend with. Such, then, will be thy easy path.

(Suhi M.I. 4)

The Yoga's way is of knowledge, of the Brahmins the way of the Vedas, of the Kshatriyas the way is of heroism, of the Sudras the service of others. The way of ways, however, is the way of the World. He who knows its mystery, of him Nanak is a slave. Yea, he himself is the manifestation of the immaculate God.

(Asa. M. I. Var. Shloka M. 2)

Of Compassion the cotton, of Contentment the thread, of Contenance the knot, of Truth the twist ; this is the sacred Thread of the soul. For, it breaks not, nor is it soiled nor wasted nor burnt.

(Asa. M.I. Var. Shloka M.I.)

He who disciplines the mind endowed with eight miraculous powers, and, through deeds, dwells upou the detached God and overwhelms the wind, water and fire (within) him becomes manifest the True Name of the Immaculate Lord.

(Bilawal M.I. Thithi)

The collyrium of Wisdom dispells all fear and one sees the immaculate One in His love, and knoweth both the sutble and the manifest, if one keepeth one's mind it its place.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 7)

When one meets with the True Guru, one's Doubt is shattered, and cease the outgoings of one's mind, and then of the (Mind's) spring out-oozes (Bliss), and attuned to the Melody of equipoise in one's very Home, one becomes intimate with one's Spouse.

(Suhi M I)

This mercurial mind is held and abides in Truth, real Home when the Lord's Name is one's support, and one loves truly one's Lord. Then the Creator-Lord unites one with Himself, of Himself.

(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti)

Let not the mind sleep within one's home, nor without.

(Ibid)

My body wears the simplicity of a mendicant ; my mind is the temple and I bathe at the fount of my heart. The Word (of the Lord) alone abides in my mind, so I'll be cast not into the womb again.

(Bilawal. M.I. 2)

Merge thy consciousness in thy God in such a way, that, making thy body a raft, thou ferriest the Sea across. Within thee is the fire (of craving), quench it, and then the light of wisdom will ever burn even and bright within thee. This light

then makes thee swim across the Sea (of material existence),
and thy mind is illumined and thou knowest all.

(Ramkali M.I.7)

Practise thou Truth alone; for, vain is every other
attachment; yea, let this mind be bewitched by the True One
alone, and let the tongue taste naught but Truth. For, save
for the Lord's Name all else tastes insipid ; and those that are
not God's, carry on their heads the load of sin. *(Maru. M.I.4)*

He who knoweth himself, knoweth (God), and his soul
mergeth in the Oversoul. *(Maru. M.I.5)*

Whosoever keeps detached and above (desire), through the
Guru's Word, he finds his God in the House of Fearlessness.
(Maru. M.I. 20)

Let (disinterested) works be the trunk, the Lord's (Name)
the branches, righteousness the flowers, and gnosis the fruit,
and attainment the leaves, and the purging of the mind's ego
the shade. See thou thy (Lord's) Power with thy eyes, hear His
Word with thy ears, and utter the True Name through thy
mouth, Yea, thus are the goods of glory assembled and one
is attuned to God in a state of Poise.

(Rag Basant, M I. Chaupadas)

Thy forelocks are in Yama's grip, still knowest thou not,
O mind ? *(Tilang. M.I.1)*

My wife, son, father, brother who of these, who of these
will hold my hand ? And when I fall in the grave, not one will
come to my rescue when the last prayer is read. *(Tilang. M.I.1)*

By true living, they who find the Truth and receive the

The Bride is widowed not if she merges in her True Lord.
(*Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis 5 : 2*)

Man emerges out of the Lord's Will, he quits also as is the Will, he mergeth too in the Will. (Ibid)

They are born not, nor do they die, they come nor go, whose minds are instructed by the Guru's Grace. They are like unto the one from whom they emanated. *(Ibid)*

One loads the Boat (of life) with sin and Launches it upon the Sea (of existence), and lo, one sees not the other shore, nor the port of sail. Dreadful is the Sea, but there's no Boatman, nor the Rowers to row the Boat across.

(*Maru M.I.2*)

The body is mere earth in which speaks but air. When dust to dust returns and air merges in the air, then what is it that dies ? Dies the individuated consciousness, dies one's strife, one's pride of self, but dies not the, all-seeing Soul.

(*Gauri. M.I.*)

THE UNSTRUCK MELODY

The Unstruck Melody that thou seekest to hear, hear thou it in the instruction of the Guru. (*Sri Rag. M.I. 2. 18*)

He, thy Lord, is immersed in the Unstruck Melody of the Word. (*Asa. M.I. 4 : 8*)

Meditating on the Guru's Word, thy wholesome Unstruck strains one hears. (*Sri Rag. M.I.*)

How is one to perform Thy worship, O Thou destroyer of coming and going ? Thy Unstruck Melody (within) drummeth ever thy glory. (*Dhanasri M.I. Arti*)

My doubt and fear are dispelled now that I hear the Unstruck Melody. (*Maru. M.I.*)

Now the mind wanders not, nor the wind waits for the Yogi is attuned to the Unstruck Melody of the Word. And the subtle five strains make him detached. Yea, 'tis God who plays upon the inner harp. (*Maru. M.I.*)

One overcomes lust, wrath and ego, nay, all the five 'thieves' through the five strains (of the Unstruck Melody), and with the Sword of Wisdom one grapples with one's mind, and the desires of the mind are re-absorbed in the Mind. (*Maru. M.I.*)

If the Unstruck Melody (of the Word) rings within one, night and day, (then) the state of the Deathless Lord is known by the Guru's Grace. (*Ramkali. M.I. 3*)

When rings the Unstruck Melody within one, one is rid of one's fears and doubts. (*Maru. M.I. Dakhni*)

When one's quintessence merges in its like, one's mind is satiated, and shedding the sense of the Other, one brings the mind home, and the current of Life flows within one and the sky (of the Tenth Door) resounds (with the Unstruck Melody)
(*Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti*)

Hear you the Melody in the House of the Fourth State¹, attuned to the region of Void, and then you reflect on the inaffable Word and your mind's outgoings submerge in the Mind.
(*Malhar. M.I.*)

They who love not, know not the taste of God. For, if one be a guest in an empty house, he shall return as empty as he came.
(*Shloka M.I. Var of Rag Suhi M.3*)

In the cage of Love, the parrot (mind) utters the words of Love, and it pecks at the Truth and sucks Nectar! and when it flies out and away it comes not back again. (*Maru. M.I. 2*)

There is but one Devotion and one Love (of God), but without being tinged with His fear, love is an illusion.
(*Basant. M.I. 3*)

THE HOLY COMPANY

In the company of the Holy, one attains to the Guru who is like the *Kamdhenu*¹, the Giver of Salvation.
(*Sri Rag. M.I. 2 : 12*)

What kind is the company of the Saints ? Where utter they the Name of the One alone.
(*Sri Rag. M.I.*)

1. The State of super-consciousness.

1. The mythical, wish-fulfilling cow.

If one cherishes Righteousness in the company of the Saints, it brings him Merit and his mind is comforted. When one's countenance is anointed with the Dust (of the Saint's feet), the (Mind's) iron is transmuted into gold.

(Ramkali. M.I. Dakhani. Onkar, 3)

THE SAINTS

Friends are they who accompany us even into the other world and wherever we are called to account, here they stand (as our pledge).

(Suni. M.I)

The God-man comes and goes as he wills.

(Ramkali. M I.)

GENESIS

From the True One came air, from air came water, from water the three worlds created He, and filled all hearts with His Light.

(Sri Rag. M.I.)

DETACHEDNESS

As the lotus lives detached in waters, as the duck floats care-free on the stream, so does one cross the Sea of existence, his mind attuned to the Word. He who lives detached, enshrining the One Lord in the mind, shorn of hope living in the midst of hope, and sees what is unperceivable and unfathomable, of him Nanak is a slave.

(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti. 5)

BAD COMPANY

Thieves, illicit lovers, prostitutes and touts keep company together, as do men of irreligion eat out of the same bowl. They know not the Lord's praise, for within them abides evil. If an ass be pasted with sandal-paste, he will still roll in dust.

(Shloka M.I. Var of Rag Suhi M.3)

FORMS AND RITUALS

They read the holy books, perform prayers and then fight ! And they worship stocks and stones and then, like the herons, enter into a pseudo-trance. In their mouth is falsehood, though their body be decked with piety, and the three lines (of Gayatri) they recite three times a day. Round their necks is a rosary, and on their foreheads the saffron-mark and the unstitched cloth upon their loins, and a cover on their heads. But if they knew the nature of their God, they would know these rituals to be false !

(Var. Asa. M.I.)

The Lord's Praise is the sacred Thread.

(Ibid)

The man-eaters say the five prayers ! And they who wield the knife wear the sacred Thread ! On their foreheads is the saffron-mark and their loins are girt by unstitched cloth, but in their hands is the knife; know ye, they are the butchers of the world.

(Ibid)

False from within, honourable from without, if such be one's way in the world, one's dirt goes not, even if one bathes at all the sixty-eight pilgrim stations. They whose heart is silken soft, though they be robed in rags, they are the blessed ones on the earth. For they are attuned to their Love

and seek ever to see His Vision, and care not for any but their Lord, the God, and what He gives they eat, and wait ever upon His Door. *(Ibid)*

We read immense loads of the sacred texts for years, and all life through, but only one thing is of account to our God—our heart—the rest is all vain prattle. *(Ibid)*

To subdue desire through *Hatha*-yoga wears off the body. Through fasting and penances, the mind is subdued not. *(Ramkali M.I. 5)*

Wandering through the pilgrim-stations, one is rid not of one's maladies. *(Ramkali M.I. 6)*

If one dyes one's robes in ochre and dons the distinctive coat of a mendicant, and tearing off one's usual wear, one wears a wallet, but spreads it out to gather coins, and begs from door to door, but instructs others in wisdom: lo, the blind of mind loses all his honour this way. He is torn by Doubt and so reflects not on the Word, and gambles his life thus away. *(Maru M.I. 7)*

EGO

If one spots out the ego within, one realises the Gate of Deliverance. *(Var. Asa. Shloka M.I.)*

Intoxicated with ego, greed and self-willedness, she is immersed in Maya. But in this wise, the ignorant Bride findeth not her Spouse. *(Tilang M.I. 4)*

The egocentrics strayed by doubt, like mad. *(Bilawal. M.I. 4)*

The (love of) body, riches and women are all manifestations of one's ego. Save for the Lord's Name, nothing goes along with man. *(Bilawal. M.I 2)*

Though ego or conceit, one attains not God, even if one utters the Gospel or reads it aloud to others. *(Ramkali M.I.6)*

Slander no one, nor incite, nor provoke another : for the egocentric, who goes this way, is blind and ignorant. *(Romkali. M.I. Dakhani Onkar 13)*

Abiding in the house of contentment and equipoise, one is rid of the vice of ego *(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti)*

When one dies to the self, one becomes all-knowing *(Ibid)*

The world came into being through a sense of individuation. *(Ibid)*

Without meeting with the Guru, one is enveloped by the smoke of ego. *(Ibid)*

The God-man conquers his mind by stilling his ego. *(Ibid)*

O ego, the cause of our coming and going O soul of sin ! *(Ibid)*

Yea, he alone is emancipated in life who is rid of his ego *(Maru. M.I.)*

One indulges in ego, and the sense of mineness of and lo, one is driven by hope and desire. But what, indeed, does one carry along save for the poison and dust (of Maya) *Maru. (M.I.10)*

Who is it that dies, who, pray, is the destroyer, who is it that comes and goes ? Who is it that attains Bliss, whose consciousness is it that is merged (in God) ? It is through ego that one dies, it is the sense of 'mineness' that destroys and it is the river of air that surges (to keep one going). But one's craving is "tired" only when the mind is imbued with the Lord's Name.
(*Shloka M.I. Var. of Maru M. 3*)

Where I-amness is, Thou art not; yea. when Thou art within me, then 'I' am not. (*Shloka M.I. Var of Maru M. 3*)

The world is differentiated, because of 'I-amness.'
(*Ramkali M.I. Siddha Goshti*)

THE PHENOMENA

Riches and beauty are like the shade of the swallow-wort tree.
(*Dhanasri Chhant, M. I. 3*)

The world is a passing vanity, enshrine thou this Truth, O my mind.
(*Tilang M.I. 1*)

The world is like sea-waves, like lightning's flash. It goeth as often as it cometh.
(*Asa M.I. Chhant, 5*)

Whatever I see, there is the union of matter and spirit in the creation which our Lord the God pervades.
(*Sri Rag. M.I. 4:18*)

From the True One came air, from air came water, from water sprang the three worlds and He, the Lord, pervaded all.
(*Sri Rag. M.I. 3:15*)

The world is like a play, like a dream: in an instant, the play is over,
(*Sri Rag. M.I. 3:11*)

What kind of station is this world ? It would be a true home only if it stayed !
(*Sri Rag. M.I. Shtapadis, 1:17*)

The sky and the earth will pass away, the One alone will remain. The sun and the moon, night and day and myriads of stars will also go, but the abode of the One God will stay eternally and forever.
(*Ibid 8:17*)

When the crop (of life) is ripe, it breaks with a click and is destroyed; how can then one be proud of the mere coming and-going ?
(*Sri Rag. M.I. Pahra, 4-2*)

True and Thy worlds, True Thy universes, True Thy regions, True the form Thou createst.
(*Asa. M.I. Var Shloka M.I.*)

The world is the abode of the True one, in it the True one abides.
(*Ibid. Shloka M. 2*)

Nanak : creating the world of life, and implanting His Name within it, God made it the expression of His eternal Law.
(*Asa. M.I. Var*)

I see within myself the whole world mirrored, by the Guru's Grace, and I deal with it in Truth, seated in poise.
(*Ramkali. M I. Siddha Goshti*)

From the Unmanifest, He, the Pure One, of Himself became manifest; from being attributeless, He endowed Himself with attributes.
(*Ibid*)

It is for the God-man that our True God established the earth.
(*Ibid*)

Beauty and dominions last but for a few days, but if one is blest with the Lord's Name, one's (inner) darkness is illumined. *(Bilawal M.I. 3)*

The world is like the quadruped : and ego is the butcher. The Lord, creating the creation, has left it free to do as it wills. *(Ramkali M.I. Dakhani Onkar, 18)*

The world comes into being through a sense of individuation, and, forsaking the Lord's Name, it comes to grief *(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti 68)*

Yea, this world is the house of desire, and whosoever resides in it, is burnt down by ego. *(Maru M.I. 11)*

On the (world's) pasture-land, one passes but a few days and sports, enveloped by darkness ; and like the juggler, one juggles one's part, as one mumbles in a dream. *(Maru. M.I. 1.3)*

As rotate the buckets hung on the chain of the persian well, one being emptied and the other being filled, so is the play of our God; He acteth as is His wondrous glory. *(Prabhati M.I. 2)*

The world is like the dust ! if one deals in dust one earns ashes. The body too is but dust, for, when the soul flies away, one rolls in dust. *(Shloka M.I. Var of Sarang, M. 4, 2)*

OMENS

One keeps count of the auspicious days, but thinks not that our God, the One Supreme Being, is above and beyond these. *(Ramkali M.I. 4)*

THE BEGINNINGS

For aeons of years, there was nothing but chaos; and there was neither earth, nor sky, only God's Infinite Will was. And, there was neither night nor day, neither the sun nor the moon, and God was in Himself contained. Neither there were the (four) sources of creation, nor of speech. Neither air there was nor water; neither birth, nor death; neither coming nor going. Neither divisions of the world there were nor of the under-world, nor the seven seas, nor rivulets, nor streams. Neither was then the sky, nor the earth; nor the world, nor the underworld. Neither the nether regions there were, nor death there was nor time; neither being nor becoming, neither heaven nor hell. Neither was there the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, nay, not another but the Absolute Lord. Neither woman then was, nor man; neither caste, nor station, neither pleasure nor pain. Neither there were the celibates, nor men of charity, neither the adepts, nor the seekers, neither indulgers in joys of the flesh, nor the yogis, *Jangams*, or *Nathas*, neither sect there was nor creed. Neither were there the practisers of austerities or contemplation, nor of self-control; neither worshippers nor fasting men. Yea, there was no one to utter, "Lo, there's also another." The Lord only Himself was in Absolute Bliss and prized only Himself His own glory.
(*Maru. M.I. 15*)

THE FOUR AGES

Nanak: for the spirit-filled human body there is a chariot and a charioteer. Age after age they change, yea, the wise one knoweth it all. In the age of *Satya*, contentment is the chariot and religion the charioteer. In the *Treta* age, conti-

nence is the chariot and power drives it on. In the *Duapar* age, austerity is the chariot and charity its driving force. In the *Kali*¹ age the chariot is of fire and it is driven along by falsehood. (*Asa. M I. Var*)

WOMAN

From the woman is our birth, in the woman's womb are we conceived To the woman are we engaged, to the woman are we wedded. The woman is our friend, from the woman is the family, yea, through the woman are our bonds with the world. Why call woman evil who gives birth to kings and all? From the woman is the woman, without the woman there is no one, save the one God alone.

(*Asa. M.I. Var*)

HOUSEHOLD

Amidst the impurities of the world, he who abides in the Pure One attains the true way of Yoga. (*Suhi M.I.*)

One must live in the world as the lotus lives, detached, in water, or as the duck lives in a stream.

(*Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti*)

TRANSMIGRATION

Precious is human birth : only those turned Godwards attain unto it. (*Suhi. M.I. Kafi,*)

Without the Guru's Grace, one cometh and goeth.

(*Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti*)

1. Identified with the present age.

By true living, they who find the Truth and receive the Wisdom of the Guru, they are neither born nor do they die. Their comings and goings are ended.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 4:14)

The God-man cometh and goeth as he willeth.

(Ramkali M.I.)

The bondage of ego is that we are cast into the womb.

(Asa. M.I. Var. Shloka, M. 2)

O ego, the cause of our coming and going ! O soul of sin !

(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti)

THE MIND

In thy mind are the jewels, the rubies, the pearls and the diamonds !

(Sri Rag. M.I. 4:21)

What kind is the man of Wisdom ? Yea, he who knoweth himself, he alone knoweth.

(Sri Rag. M.I. 4:30)

If thy mind be impure, impure also are thy body and tongue.

(Sri Rag. Ashtapadis, M.I. 1:5)

O my mind, love thy Lord as is the love of the fish for water. The more the waler, the more she revels and her body and mind are at peace. O my mind, love thy Lord as the chatrik bird loves the rains; all the pools are brimful and green is the earth, but he longs only for the auspicious drop. O my mind, love thy Lord as water loves the milk. It suffers itself the heat, but the milk it allows not to burn.

(Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis, 2—4:11)

Water is held in the pitcher, but without water can a pitcher be shaped ? The mind is held by Wisdom, but without the Guru's Wisdom, how can the mind be gathered ?

(Asa. M I. Var)

If the mind becomes stranger to itself, estranged from it, then, is the whole world !

(Suhi. M.I. 5)

When the mind is satisfied by the Mind, then is shattered one's ego and cease one's outgoings.

(Gauri. M.I.)

If one holds One's mind in a seedless trance, the Swan-soul then flies not out, nor the Wall (of time) falls.

(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti)

The body is the store-house the mind its pedlar, and it is the mind in poise that deals in Truth.

(Ibid)

When there wasn't a human body or heart, the mind abided in the Absolute Lord in detachedness.

(Ibid)

The God-man conquers his mind by stilling his ego.

(Ibid)

As the mind leads, so the mind goes. Yea, this mind now drives towards virtue, now sin.

(Bilawal. M.I. 2)

If one disciplines the mind, through which eight psychic powers are attained, and, through deeds, contemplates the True One, the ever-Detached, and abandons his humours born of wind, water and fire, then within his heart abides the immaculate and True Name; to it is then one's mind attuned, and then death overwhelms him not.

(Bilawal. M.I. Thitti)

The mind is mercurial; it is held not, and surreptitiously it eats the green shoots (of evil). If one cherishes the Lotus-Feet (of God) in the mind, one lives eternally, and abides ever in a state of super-consciousness.

(Ramkali. M.I. Dakhani Onkar, 23)

The body is the furnace, in which is (cast) the iron of the mind, and it is heated by the five fires. And the coals are of sins stacked with tongs of care; and lo, the mind is burnt.

(Maru. M.I.3)

If one shuts up the (mind's) snake in the basket, its poison goes not

(Maru. M.I. 2)

O my mind, what did you bring into the world, and what will you take out ? O my mind, you are delivered only if you are rid of your Doubt.

(Tukhari. M.I.)

Mercurial is the mind, so it knows not the extent (of God).

(Basant. M. I. 4)

The mind wings ceaselessly after Maya, like the bird across the skies, and it is only when the five Thieves (within) are overwhelmed through the (Guru's) Word, that calm prevails in the blessed township (of the body).

(Prabhati. M.I. 10)

HEREAFTER

He whose protector is the Guru-God, he is questioned not Hereafter.

(Sri Rag. M. I. Ashtapadis, 2 : 15)

In the world beyond, only the virtuous deeds are taken into account. The evil-doer is thrashed and he wails, but who is there to listen to his woes ? The blind of mind has wasted his life away.

(Asa. M.I. Var. Pauri 3)

Hereafter, caste and power are of no account, for a new man is born into the world of God. Yea, they whose honour is of account to the Lord, they alone are men of honour.

(Asa. M I. Var)

If a literate man be a sinner, an illiterate saint is punished not in his stead. And who is the literate, who illiterate one, is to be considered only in the Court of God. Yea, he who follows his mind's will (is illiterate and) shall suffer Hereafter. *(Ibid)*

Man commands here as he wills, but Hereafter he passes through a narrow path. And, naked he is driven to hell and he is struck with terror. *(Ibid)*

Hereafter, one has to cross the Sea of Fire with its poisonous flames, and, there, no one, save for one's soul, keeps company with one. Yea, the Sea of Fire blazes, its waves leaping high, and the egocentric is cast into it and he is roasted therein. *(Maru M.I. 6)*

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

Without the Lord's True Name, what use are the saffron-mark or the sacred Thread ? *(Asa. M.I. Var Shloka M.I)*

The more one takes to garbs and distinctive marks, the more one's body suffers. O life, these are thy own doings !
(Asa. M.I. Shloka M.I.)

HEAVEN AND HELL

The false ones find no refuge, their faces are blackened and they are marched off to hell. *(Asa. M.I Var Pauri 2)*

Thy name, O Lord, is 'The Formless One' : dwelling on it,
one goes not to hell. *(Asa. M I. Var Pauri 5)*

In ego does one land in heaven or hell.
(Asa. M.I. Var Shloka M.I.)

PILGRIMAGES

How can the Undeceived One be deceived by bathing (at
the holy places), (or customary) charity or (mere) knowledge,
or ablutions ? *(Suhi M.I. 5)*

You go to bathe at the pilgrim-stations with an evil mind
and the body of a thief. So while your one part is washed,
the other parts are sullied twice over. From without, you are
cleansed like a gourd, but within you is sheer poison. The
Saint is blessed even without (such a wash), for, the thief
remains a thief even after ablutions.

(Shloka M.I. Rag. Suhi, Var M.3.)

FASTING AND FOOD

Men of contentment serve their Lord and dwell upon no
one but the True One alone. They put not their feet in sin and
practise what is good and holy. They loosen their worldly
bonds and eat but sparingly. *(Asa. M.I. Var Pauri)*

As one starves, one loses taste of the tongue, and in love
with the Other, one grieves immensely. *(Asa. M.I. Var M.I.)*

The foodgrains are a god, so are water, air, fire and salt.
And when one mixes *ghee*, the fifth god, with food, it becomes
purer still. *(Asa. M.I. Var Shloka M.I.)*

All things we eat and drink are pure, for the Lord has blest
us with them in His Mercy. *(Asa. M.I. Var)*

O friend, that food, that pleasure is vain which, if indulged pains the body or brings to the mind thoughts of sin.

(Sri Rag. M.I.)

NIRVANA OR EMANCIPATION

He has neither hunger nor thirst, and his mind pleased with itself, he seeks the all-pervading, detached God in every heart.

(Maru. M.I. Dakhni)

As the lotus lives detached in water, or the duck in the stream, so does one cross the Sea of material existence, his mind attuned to the Word, enshrining the One God in the mind, shorn of hope in the midst of hope.

(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti)

The God-man is for ever emancipated.

(Ibid)

When one overcometh the three Modes, one eateth as of the Uneatable. And then, Nanak, the Emancipator of Himself emancipateth.

(Ibid)

He who dies to the self, being ever-awake to the Word, alone is emancipated.

(Ibid)

Without meeting with the True Guru, one is emancipated not.

(Ibid)

MAN

Precious is the human birth; only those turned Godwards attain to it.

(Suhī M.I. Kafi I : 3)

Says Nanak : "That alone happens what God Wills, for nothing is in the hands of man."

(Sri Rag. Ashtapadis. 3 : 4)

Beauteous is God's temple within thee. He, the Creator: has raised it.

(Sri Rag. M.I. Ashtapadis)

Implanting His Name within us, God made our body the expression of His Law.

(Asa. M.I. Var Pauri 3)

Wonderful is found, wonderful is wisdom. Wonderful is life, wonderful its distinctions. Wonderful is form, wonderful is colour. Wonderful are the creatures who wander about naked. Wonderful is air, wonderful the water. Wonderful is fire that works many wonders. Wonderful is the earth, wonderful are the species. Wonderful are the tastes that lure life away. Wonderful is Union, Wonderful is Separation. Wonderful the Hunger, wonderful the experience. Wonderful the praise, wonderful the eulogy, wonderful the Path, wonderful the straying-away Wonderful the nearness, wonderful the distance : wonderful the Presence one see-eth in the present. O wonder-struck am I to see wonder upon wonder. But it is through perfect Destiny that one knoweth its answer.

(Asa. M.I. Var Shloka M.I.)

O ignorant one, what use is thy beauty when the Lord liketh it not ?

(Tilang M.I. 4)

The body that came with thee, that too keeps not thy company in the end. Thy father, mother, sons and kindred, whom you love, cast thee to the flames when the soul departs from thy body.

(Tilang M.I. 2)

The body is the tree, the mind the bud, the five knowing

faculties are the (other) buds. They uniting with God, partake of His Essence, and so are trapped not. They who fly fast seeking the seed (of desire), their wings are clipped and they fall into the trap of immense sin.

(Ramkali. M I. Dakhani Onkar, 33)

The body is a lump of dust, an illusory wall of sand, then how, O man, can you earn Merit without the Lord's Name.

(Maru. M.I. 11)

EQUIPOISE (SAHAJA)

The Saints, like the swans, abandon not the Pool of Nectar, and, through loving adoration, merge in equipoise.

(Dhanasri. M.I. Ashtapadis, 8)

The God-conscious beings dwell upon Him through devotion in a state of equipoise.

(Dhanasri. M.I. Ashtapadis, 8)

He alone meets truly with his God who meets Him through equipoise. And then he dies not, nor comes he, nor goes. In the Master is the servant, in the servant is the Lord.

(Dhanasri. M I. Ashtapadis, 2)

Through the Guru's World, one merges in equipoise, and through equipoise, one attains the essence of the Absolute. Then, one goeth not on another path And one who seeketh, finds too.

(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti, 23)

If one holds one's mind in a seedless Trance, this swan-soul then flies not out, nor the wall (of Time) falls.

(Ramkali. M.I. Siddha Goshti)

MAYA

He who is drunk with the wine of Maya, forsaking the Lord's Name, is never at peace, for Bliss comes from the loving adoration of the Guru. He's like a swine, a cur, an ass, a cat; yea, a quadruped, a vile *chandala*, an untouchable. (*Bilawal. M.I. 2*)

Neither Maya dies (within one) nor is the mind stilled and the sea (of desire) swells with a myriad waves as if intoxicated with wine. But the (body's) boat, which is directed by the Truth within, sways not upon the surging seas, and is ferried across. (*Maru. M.I. 9*)

Silver and gold are but an illusion, and, one day, they mix with the dust. (*Maru. M.I. 5*)

The worshipper of Maya passes through the hell of countless¹ species, but he receives the reward of what he had committed. (*Maru. M.I. 8*)

The worshipper of Maya runs after nothing but illusion. (*Maru. M.I. 9*)

When Maya clings to one, one can overwhelm her not, but the True Guru may save one, implanting the God's Nanak within. (*Parbhati. M.I.*)

KARMA, FREE-WILL AND GRACE

As is the state of one's consciousness, so is one's way. (*Sri Rag. M.I. 1:30*)

Thy Grace is my family. (*Sri Rag. M.I. 4:7*)

1. Lit. eighty-four lakhs.

When our body is content with Truth, God's Grace is upon us. *(Sri Rag. M.I. 4:15)*

Nanak : if the Lord so Wills, He turns a crow into a swan. *(Sri Rag. Var Shloka M.I.)*

Of what avail is that gift which we receive through our own efforts ? Nanak : a Blessing is that which the Lord, in His Mercy, blesses us with. *(Asa. M.I. Var Shloka M 2)*

O God, how canst Thou be angry with Thy own children, for, as Thou belong to them, they belong to Thee. *(Sri Rag. M.I.)*

The good and bad that a man does, he receives the reward thereof. *(Var. Asa. M.I.)*

O friends, the Writ of our Lord the God can be effaced not. *(Ramkali. M.I.)*

The mind is the paper on which are recorded in the ink of our deeds, good and bad, the impressions as the habit of our cumulative past dictates, but limitless (also) are the virtues of our God.....For the dross turns into gold if one meets with the Guru who blesses us with the Nectar-Name of God and the fires of the body are extinguished. *(Maru. M.I.)*

SOUL AND OVERSOUL

Krishna may be the god of gods, but higher still is man's Self, yea, his soul. *(Asa. M.I. Var Shloka M. 2)*

Having abandoned oneself to the Self, one revels, and, then, becoming ashes, his soul departs. *(Asa. M.I. Var Pauri 5.)*

This soul had wandered through many births before the True Guru imparted to it the World. (*Asa. M.I. Var Pauri 4*)

Immaculate in the body with an immaculate swan-soul in which abides the Lord's Name, the very essence of the detached God. It drinks all pain like sweet pleasures and so suffers not again. (*Maru. M.I. 14*)

The body and the soul are immensely in love with each other; the male-soul is (detached) like a Yogi, while the body is like a beautiful woman. Lo, the soul enjoys many joys, but, then, he flies out; and while so doing consults not (with his bride). (*Maru. M.I. 8*)

God resides in the soul; the soul is contained in God. (*Bhairo M.I.*)

Dieth individuated consciousness, dieth one's strife, one's pride of self, but dieth not the Soul that see-eth all. (*Gauri. M I.*)

The drop is contained in the sea, so too the sea in the drop. (*Ramkali. M.I.*)

THE TRUE YOGA

He alone is a Yogi who knoweth the Way. (*Dhanasri. M.I. 7*)

Yoga is neither in the patched coat, nor in the Yogi's staff, nor in smearing oneself with ashes. Nor in wearing ear-rings, nor close-cropping the head, nor in blowing the horn. If one remains detached in the midst of attachments, one attains to the (true) state of Yoga. One becomes not a Yogi by mere talk. If one looks upon all creation alike,

one is acclaimed as a true Yogi. Yoga is not in abiding at the tombs or the crematoriums, nor in entering into a pseudo-trance. Yoga consists not in roaming the world, nor in bathing at pilgrim-stations. If one remains detached in the midst of attachments, then, verily, one attains to the (true) state of Yoga. *(Suhī. M I. 8)*

Sayeth Nanak: "Die thou to thy self while yet alive: yea, practise thou such a Yoga, that without being blown, the Horn ringeth and one attaineth to the state of fearlessness. Yea, if one remaineth detached in the midst of attachments, then, verily, one attaineth to the (true) state of Yoga." *(Suhī. M.I. 8)*

PRAYER

I am shorn of all merit, O Lord, then, how shall I attain unto Thee? Neither I have beauty nor lustrous eyes, nor family, nor culture nor sweet speech. I have neither intuition nor intellect, I'm ignorant and unwise. Bless me Thou, O my Lord, that I repair to thy Feet. Of what avail is my Thou, my Lord, lovest me not, and clinging to the Illusion, I am strayed by Dobut? It is only when I lose my ego that I merge in Thee and become Thy Bride, blest with all the nine treasures of the earth. Birth after birth, I was separated from Thee and I grieved. Now hold me by Thy hand, O my Love my God, my King! *(Suhī. M.I. Ashpatadīs)*

O God, enjoyable are gold and silver, so are pearls and rubies, but these are Thy gifts, and yet I love them, not Thee. The mansions raised of dust and of decorative stones have lured me away by their grandeur and I sat not by the side of my Love the sky (of my head) the swallows (of age) shriek; the

herons (of grey hair) have descended upon me. I am ready to leave for the real Home, O how shall I face Thee now ? I sleep, the night (of life) turned into the dawn (of death), and having lost my way, I kept separated from Thee. Now, pain is my only refuge. Thou art the Lord of Merit, I am meritless O Lord, this is the only prayer of Nanak to Thee : "Thou hast blest all Thy Brides with Thy company for all these many nights: Isn't there a night also for me ?"

(Suhī M.I. Kuchajī)

When Thou art with me I attain everything. Thou, O Lord art my Master, my capital-stack. When Thou abidest within me I am in Peace. Yea, blessed am I when Thou comest into me If such be Thy Will, Thou makest me a king or a beggar detached from the world. If such be Thy Will, the seas surge in the (heart's) sky. In thy Will do we cross the Sea of material existence, in Thy will is our load drowned in mid-stream. In Thy Will do I find Thee a colourful Person and then I'm imbued with Thy Parise, O Treasure of Virtue. In Thy Will, Thou seemest dreadful to me and I'm bound to the cycle of coming and going. O Lord, unfathomable, incomparable, seeing Thee, I surrender to Thee. What shall I ask, pray what shall I utter save that I hunger and thirst for Thee ?

(Suhī. M.I. Suchajī)